



THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION
DEVOTED TO BORDER HISTORY

Issued Weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 26.

Price, Five Cents.



"MY GOD! THEY HAVE HANGED MY PARD, AND SHALL RUE THIS DAY," CRIED BUFFALO BILL, AS HE BEHELD THE SUSPENDED FORM —
(CHAPTER LXXXVII.)



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BUFFALO BILL'S VICTORIES.

By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

A CRUEL BLOW.

Moonlight on the prairie!

The crescent moon shed a dull light on the wide prairie, which stretches mile after mile away, until it breaks against a distant range of hills that rise along the horizon to the westward.

Gently waves the long grass beneath a balmy breeze, and, excepting the whining howl of the wolf, prowling around for a midnight feast, no sounds awake the deep sleep of nature.

And yet this quiet scene, this calm union between earth and heaven is polluted by the impious foot of man, for winding along through the prairie grass are two dark forms, rudely breaking the repose of nature, and yet seemingly impressed by the calm beauty of the hour.

Side by side are two horsemen, the one a paleface, as the whites are termed in that Southwestern frontier, the other a negro, whose black skin shines with a polish in the moonlight, and whose generous mouth, half-open, indicates a desire to break forth into some weird melody of his race, but whose musi-

cal propensities are subdued from a fear of the consequences, for the two horsemen are in the land where the ring of the Indian's rifle is oftener heard than the crack of the teamster's whip.

The moonlight reveals that the white man's features are cast in a brave and determined mold, and the look of courage hovering around the handsome mouth proves he will dare attempt any deed his gay and reckless mind might plan.

Like a thorough horseman he sits in the saddle, a stylish Mexican tree bespangled with silver, and reins back with the heavy bit his restive horse, a dark bay of good size, and with every indication of possessing great speed and endurance.

His companion, the negro, is also well armed, and the horse he bestrides is evidently a fair match for the dark bay in beauty, though he lacks the same indications of speed.

"Well, Tony, the hills loom up bravely, and in an hour more we will be near home; so come, let us have a canter," said the man, addressing the negro, and, at a word, the two animals sprang forward into a long, sweeping gallop, while Tony replied:

"I'se willin', massa; de Lord knows dis nigger

chile ain't goin' to grumble at chance to see hoeecake soon; oh, golly! how glad all de folks be to see us, sah.

"I guess Missy Daisy be mighty pleased, too, for she do like you a heap."

"I only wish I could find out who her parents were, Tony."

"She might not had no fadder and mudder, sah."

"You're an idiot, Tony."

"Yes, sah, I 'spose I is; but she so much like a angil I thoughted she mout fall down from heaben when you find her in de wagin on de prairie."

"Well, she was very nearly a dead angel, Tony, when I did find her, poor little girl; but she has found a good home and fond parents with my noble friend, Oscar Hillary, and his wife."

"Yas, sah, she hab, and young Massa Guy do think a heap ob her."

"Dey tole me to hurry back with de mail, sah, for dey all hoped you would send a letter tellin' you was comin' soon ter visit 'em, but dey didn't think I'd meet you and bring you along, massa."

"Dey all do think a heap of you, sah."

"And I love all of them, Tony, in that happy home. Great God! can the cabin be on fire, for look yonder!"

The tones of the man rang out strong and clear, and he pointed to a red glare on the horizon.

"It right whar we live, sah!"

"Come, Tony! for your life, ride! for there is devils' work going on at the Hillary home!"

The two dashed forward like the wind.

After riding along a trail that wound through some timber and ascending a hill, they came upon a lovely valley, which had a stream winding through it.

It was a grand but terrible scene that met their vision—the settlement on fire, and dancing around the burning cabins a number of red forms, gazing joyously upon the ruin they had wrought.

"Good God! my poor friends are there—or what has become of them?"

The words burst from his lips, and, frenzied by the sight, he uttered a wild and prolonged yell, and, drawing a revolver in each hand, put his horse to full speed and dashed recklessly and madly down the hill, and the next instant was upon the sickening scene.

What a sight for a human being to behold!

What a terrible ruin had fallen upon that peaceful settlers' valley!

Every cabin that dotted the river bank was in flames, a score of forms, of men, and women, and children, were stretched lifeless and bleeding upon the ground, and around in groups, fighting and quarreling over the plunder, were the perpetrators of this hellish crime—men more inhuman than their savage allies, criminated wretches, outlaws from the pale of civilization, and blots upon the green prairie and the forest which they desecrated with their presence.

A motley group, comprising the renegade American, whose life of crime had driven him to live like a hunted hound, the swarthy Mexican bravado, who warred upon friend and foe alike, and the wild Comanche, the natural savage of the Southwestern frontier.

It was the guerilla band of El Sol, the Bandit of the Prairie, who had won a name to be feared and execrated along the entire Mexican and American borders.

Maddened by what he saw, heedless of the consequences to himself, the horseman darted into the midst of the fiendish band, his revolvers ringing out death knells upon either side, and startling the bandits by his sudden and deadly appearance.

A dozen rifles were leveled at the man, and the next instant he would have been riddled with bullets but for the ringing order of a deep and commanding voice.

"Hold! On your lives kill him not! He is my game!"

"That man is Buffalo Bill, the Border Scout!"

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE PRAIRIE BANDITS.

At the words of their leader the weapons were lowered, and a tall form advanced toward the man, who sat upon his trembling horse, his face fearless, and one revolver extended in each hand.

"What! would you shoot me?" cried the man, as he saw the hostile position.

"Yes, El Sol, you murdering renegade! I would send my last bullet through your cruel heart!" replied Buffalo Bill, and he aimed quickly, his finger drew the trigger, and—the cap snapped!

Springing forward, El Sol seized the bridle rein

with one hand, and dragged the scout from his horse with the other.

Drawing his knife, the scout rushed upon the bandit chief with a cry of rage; but El Sol sprang back, and a lariat settled over the scout's shoulders, and he was dragged violently to the ground.

A moment more and he was securely bound hand and foot, a prisoner.

El Sol, the leader of the band of renegades, was a man whose name was feared far and wide, and his terrible presence in the midst of the valley settlement was a certain sign that bloodshed and ruin would follow in his track.

Surprising the small but peaceful settlement, he had cruelly begun his barbarous work, murdered those who resisted, and, once having, like the panther, tasted blood, his passions were unbridled, and his human fiends were allowed full reign, and women and children, as well as men, fell beneath their deadly knife, until all had perished—no, not all, for several of the young maidens were to be borne off into a life of cruel captivity.

El Sol was a man of striking appearance, six feet in height and perfectly formed.

His bearing was military, his manner graceful, and commingling both ease and sternness.

His face was a study to look upon; the brow massive, intellectual and determined, while masses of light-brown hair fell in a negligent manner upon his shoulders.

Browned by long exposure, his face was yet, to a certain extent, pale, for there was no color in it, and had it not been sunburned would have appeared ghastly.

His head was sheltered by a remarkably broad-brimmed sombrero, encircled by a small scarf of silver thread net work, and upon the front, an inch above the crown, was an ornament which gave him the name he wore El Sol—the Sun.

It was a diamond representation of the sun, fully three inches in diameter, and supported upon a gold pedestal. It was so fastened as to turn like a wheel, either by the motion of the wearer or the influence of the wind, and constantly shed forth innumerable lights as it wheeled and caught the rays of sunshine or moonlight.

If the master was remarkable looking, the steed he rode was not less so, for he was a tall, long-limbed, long-bodied animal, gaunt as a hound, and

perfectly black, while his eyes flashed viciously and his glittering white teeth were displayed when any one approached him, excepting El Sol, to whom he was ever most obedient.

The men of the band were a strange commingling of nationalities, for among the palefaces were the jolly German, the blond Englishman, the luck-and-go-easy Irishman, the passionate Spaniard, and versatile Frenchman—all men who had been in honorable pursuits ere they were branded by crime and driven for refuge to seek a life of danger and cruelty upon the boundless prairie.

With wonderful skill El Sol held his men together, his slightest word being law and gospel among them, and in their pastimes in camp he was never wont to join, ever holding himself aloof from the crowd, and brooding over the bitter, damning past, whatever it might be, for no one knew aught of him, other than that he had appeared as a highwayman some years before, alone in the country, until his daring adventures and wonderful successes at length drew around him a band of congenial spirits in blood and rapine.

For several years El Sol and his band had held an irrepressible power, raiding upon both American and Mexican territory, and lying in wait for the rich trading trains that were wont to wend their way from one country to another.

Also the emigrant train, the lonely ranch, the sparsely-inhabited settlement, and, sometimes, even the small village or border towns were visited by his reckless raiders, who generally escaped with quantities of plunder, and, being well armed and mounted, besides under perfect discipline, they invariably defeated all attempts to punish them.

In a distant and lonely range of hills, El Sol had his robber stronghold, and many were the strange stories told of this bandit retreat; yet no one could ever say, unless he belonged to the band, that he knew aught of the rendezvous, other than from hearsay.

Such was the man who had at last brought ruin upon the valley home of Oscar Hillary, and the reader can easily imagine how little mercy the scout might expect from a bandit chief who defied the laws of God and mankind.

As the first of the cabins burned lower, and the night was far spent, the sound of strife and cursing gradually died away, until shortly after midnight the bivouac of the bandits was as quiet as the dead.

whose bodies yet lay in the moonlight, their faces lighted up with the glow of life, from the reflection of the ruddy coals.

The sentinels had been set, and paced their monotonous beat in silence, the Indian and the paleface wrapped his serape around him and had lain down to rest, and all was still in the ruined settlement.

Yet El Sol had not sought rest; for, with moody brow and compressed lip he walked to and fro before the glowing coals that marked where once had stood the Hillary cabin.

With his hands clasped behind his back, he had thus paced up and down for some hours, his thoughts far away from the scene of bloodshed his hand had wrought, and his eyes paying no heed to the cold, upturned faces of the dead.

Suddenly he paused in his walk, turned quickly, and walked a short distance away, toward a clump of low trees, where stood a guard half asleep; but who hastily turned around when he saw his chief approach.

"Pat, where are the prisoners?"

"Is it the gal beauties yer honor means?"

"Are they not all together?"

"Divil a bit, yer honor; for, yer see, the gals was sint over yonder to stay for the night in the log hut afore this Satan's imp was after coming along," and the Irishman pointed to where Buffalo Bill was bound against a tree, his head drooping upon his breast as though asleep.

"Well, sir, I have come to have a word with you," and El Sol stood before the scout.

The scout raised his head; his face was pale, and was pinched with suffering, while he seemed in a kind of stupor.

But catching sight of the chief his whole manner changed, his lips were compressed, and his eyes blazed with a deadly light.

"You do not like me, I judge," said El Sol, with a sneer on his face.

"I love you so dearly that I would joyfully give my life for—yours!" hissed the scout.

"Well, you have had cause to hate me, I admit; but you are doomed, and your sands are ebbing fast, for I mean to kill you!"

It would be impossible to portray the extreme vindictiveness of manner with which El Sol spoke.

"Because I shot one of your prowling band a few months ago, who attempted to steal my horses, did

you have cause to bring ruin upon the Hillary home?" said Buffalo Bill.

"What care I how many of my hirelings you slay? My revenge toward Hillary and you is different. But this is idle talk. I came here to ask you if you valued your life?"

"Not in the least."

"Hold! You value your life more than gold?"

"Why do you ask?"

"A year ago you guided a train of prairie men across the prairies, did you not?"

"I did."

"You were caught upon the prairie when it was burning, were you not?"

"Yes."

"Your horses were all burned to death, and you and the prairie men only escaped by making a shelter of your wagons; is it not so?"

"Yes."

"In that train there was a vast quantity of gold, which the prairie men took to some spot and buried until they should come after it; am I right?"

"Yes."

"You know where that gold is buried?"

"Yes; I carried them to the spot, and when they reached the nearest town they were to return with wagons and get it."

"They never returned."

"How do you know this?" asked Buffalo Bill, with surprise.

"First answer me one question; how many prairie men were there who knew this secret?"

"Eleven; they were all rich traders."

"Good! I say they never returned for their gold—because—I put them all to death."

"El Sol, you are a prairie bloodhound!"

"Be sparing of your epithets; yes, I put them all to death, because they loved their gold more than their lives, for they would not tell me where it was hidden."

"They were brave men."

"They were fools; now you have a chance for your life; here, Pat, go and fetch this man's horse and arms to him."

"It's meself will be afther doing that same, yer honor, for he's a loikely man, is he."

"Silence, you prating idiot, and obey!"

"I will hold me breath, yer honor, until yer honor tells me to spake again."

"Curses on you, if you speak another word, I'll send a bullet through your brain!" cried El Sol, in a rage.

"I'm dumb, yer honor!"

The chief drew a pistol, but the nimble Irishman darted behind a tree, and so dodged away to obey the order given him.

In ten minutes he returned with the scout's horse.

"Now, Bill Cody, I will mount my horse and accompany you, if you will tell me where that treasure is buried, and then you are free to go.

"If you refuse, you shall die as soon as I reach my mountain stronghold, I swear it!"

"What does the oath of a liar and murderer amount to?" sneeringly said Buffalo Bill, while Pat really did hold his breath with amazement and fright to hear his chief thus bearded.

"By Heaven! do you dare me?" yelled El Sol.

"You would gladly commit any crime I dared you to," quietly returned the scout.

"This is wasting words; will you take your life on the terms I offer?"

"The prairie men refused, did they not, the same terms?"

"Yes."

"Then I will do as they did, and, El Sol, you can kill me whenever you feel inclined."

But just then in his ears rang the clear cry of the night hawk, and his heart beat quickly, for it gave him the assurance that he was not forsaken, as the weird shriek of the bird he knew came from human lips.

With the hope of escape came a fierce thirsting for revenge.

Silently El Sol had stood a moment in deep thought, and then he said, just as a second wild cry of the night hawk pierced the air:

"Buffalo Bill, you have sealed your fate; you die when we reach the stronghold; but you have until morning to reconsider your determination.

"Pat, take the horse back again, and then watch this prisoner; if he escapes I will scalp you alive."

The Irishman led the horse away, at the same time affectionately rubbing the top of his red head, as though he already felt the keen edge of the knife.

Without another word El Sol walked away, just as the cry of the night bird was again heard, and this time only a short distance off in the forest.

Once more the scout was alone, but his grief was

deadened, as the hope of escape and revenge swept over his heart, changing him in a moment from the sorrowing man to an avenger.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

BAFFLED.

When the Irishman returned, after having led the horse away, he walked up to Buffalo Bill and closely examined his hands, remarking:

"Well, honey, you see it's mesilf will be skulped if yez afther getting away wid yer, so yez excuse my sarcumspection."

The scout made no reply, and the guard walked off to a small fire twenty feet from where he had been before stationed.

Leaning against a tree and toasting his shins before the hot coals, he now became drowsy, and, if not asleep, was very near it, for he failed to observe that his prisoner had suddenly awakened from his seeming stupor, and was earnestly glancing into the dark recesses of the glade.

Presently he heard a low, hissing sound, in imitation of a snake, and the next moment a small, dark form glided toward him and took refuge behind the tree to which he was bound.

"Minne-Blue-Eyes!" exclaimed Buffalo Bill, in surprise.

"You have come to save me?"

"Minne-Blue-Eyes remembers the time when the paleface brave saved her life; he is free," replied the young girl, for such she was.

"You have made a lasting friend of me this night, Minne, and you will find you have turned a bloodhound loose upon the trail of El Sol and his band."

The scout spoke with deep earnestness, and then, with great caution, the two stole through the glade, leaving the Irish guard dreaming of his far-away home in the Emerald Isle.

Having gone rapidly along for the distance of half-a-mile, they came to the edge of the glade, and, pausing in the moonlight, the maiden turned toward the man whom she had risked her life to save.

She was strangely beautiful for an Indian girl, a lovely wild flower of the prairie, and the moon disclosed the cause of her name, for she had blue eyes.

Yes, large, dreamy blue eyes, slumbering wells of love and passion, that were bent upon the scout with most earnest regard.

And it was a nut-brown face, in strange contrast to the dreamy blue eyes.

"Will the paleface brave seek shelter in the village of my people?" asked Minne-Blue-Eyes, in soft tones, as she paused in the moonlight, speaking almost perfect English.

"No, Minne; I must have no rest now until your band has paid dearly for this night's work.

"I must at once for the settlements and equip myself for the warpath," said Cody, earnestly.

"The great white brave has no fire guns; he will starve, for he has no horse."

"Fear not! I will not long be dismounted or unarmed."

"Will the brave have the rifle of Minne-Blue-Eyes?" and, stepping up to a clump of trees, the maiden brought forth a small, beautifully-mounted rifle.

"You are a noble, generous girl, Minne, and I thank you for saving my life; but I will not take your rifle, for I have plenty of money to buy me one in the neighboring settlement, and hate will keep me alive until I get there.

"Yet, tell me, girl, how did you know I was a prisoner?"

"The blackface with the short scalp locks came to the village of my people, after Minne-Blue-Eyes' brother, to tell him the wicked White Chief of the Sun had made a captive of the paleface who had saved the life of the Indian girl.

"The brother of Minne-Blue-Eyes was on the war trail of the Apaches, but his sister would not let the white brave die."

"And you nobly served me, too; but where did Tony go after leaving your village?"

"To the camp of the paleface warriors."

"After the soldiers? Well, it is too late for them to do any good, for my poor friends and all are dead, the valley is in ruins; but I am free—free to follow El Sol and his band to death.

"Now, Minne-Blue-Eyes, you must be off, for my escape will be discovered, and you will be overtaken."

"And the brave—where will he go?"

"I will hide in these hills until the renegades have gone, and then I will seek the settlement.

"If Tony comes to your village, tell him to wait there for me."

"Minne will tell him; good-by," and the Indian

girl held forth her hand, which the scout warmly grasped, again thanking her for having saved him from the power of El Sol.

Throwing her rifle across her shoulders, the girl then walked quickly away, leaving Buffalo Bill where she had parted with him.

How long he stood there he knew not, for his thoughts were busy with his sorrows; but presently wild yells broke on his ears, and like the hunted deer he bounded away and disappeared in the glade, just as El Sol and a dozen horsemen dashed up to the spot where he had been standing, lost in bitter meditations.

The gray light of dawn had come, the silvery moonlight was fading away, and quickly the Indians who accompanied El Sol took the trail, and followed on after the scout, pursuing him through the glade for half-a-mile, when they suddenly came to a halt, where all trace was lost at the base of a lofty, forest-clad hill.

In vain they searched for the trail, it was nowhere to be seen, and after an hour's hunt the angry chief gave up the pursuit and returned to the valley, bitterly cursing Buffalo Bill for his fortunate escape.

When the scout disappeared in the glade he bounded forward at a tremendous rate of speed, until he came to the abrupt hill where his pursuers had lost sight of the trail.

The hillside was thickly grown with timber, and up one of the tallest trees he hastily scrambled, until he had reached a considerable height, when he halted a moment to rest, for there were no resting-places against the smooth trunk ere he reached a limb fully fifty feet from the ground.

This limb branched out toward the abrupt side of the hill, and rested upon a small projection of the rocky precipice, and with bold step he walked out upon this frail bridge, stepped upon the narrow ledge, where he could scarcely hold his footing, and after ten paces came to a larger shelf on the rock, in which was visible the mouth of a small cave.

Here the scout sat down, just as his pursuers reached the foot of the tree, and his face was defiant in expression as he watched the fruitless attempts of the Indians to find his trail, and saw them glance up into the trees, to see if he had sought refuge among the branches.

"Hunt on, you savage devils, I am safe, and ere long I will be on your trail, and then look out.

"Lucky is it for me," he continued, after a while, "that I had the pluck to follow that wildcat up to her den here that day, or I should have been again in the hands of El Sol."

When his pursuers disappeared down the valley Buffalo Bill arose and entered the mouth of the cave, and then started back suddenly with a cry of fright, for two balls of fire met his eyes, and well he knew that some wild beast held possession of his den.

At first he was about to retreat and descend the tree again; but a daring light swept into his eyes, and drawing from his pocket a large jackknife, he drew off his buckskin coat, and wrapping it round his left arm, advanced boldly into the cave.

Still the eyes glared upon him, and a low growl greeted his ears, a warning to him to depart.

"It is either a panther or a bear; but no matter which, I will not let him drive me away," he firmly muttered, and then with a loud yell and sudden spring he was upon the animal.

Taken by surprise by this sudden turn in affairs, the beast, a large panther, darted to one side, and then with a fierce growl was upon the scout.

CHAPTER LXXXVII.

THE FIGHT IN THE DARK CAVE.

Buffalo Bill had nerves of steel and was a giant in strength, while he was as quick as a cat in every movement.

When it came to a death-struggle with the wild beast in the dark cave, he met the attack bravely, thrusting his protected arm into the mouth of the panther, and, in spite of the fierce claws tearing into his shoulders, he drove his knife again and again into his terrible foe.

It was a fearful struggle, and both man and panther were bleeding freely; but Buffalo Bill held his wrapped arm with such force into the red jaws of the beast that he could only wound with his claws; yet these were sufficient, for they cut a number of gashes into the head, breast, and muscular arms of the scout.

But while the panther wounded slightly, the quick blows of the man were fatal, and ere the huge animal released his clutch upon the arm the muscles relaxed and the fight was ended.

Staggering to his feet, bleeding, panting, and faint, Bill unwrapped his jacket from his arm, and

found that the teeth of the panther had done him but little harm.

Quickly he entered the cave, which spread out as he progressed into a large room, and, following a stream of light beyond, he soon came to another and longer opening, which led out into a miniature valley, of not more than an acre in size, and through the center of which a rivulet ran.

Approaching the stream, the scout knelt down, and for a long time bathed his wounds, after which he bound them up as well as he was able with strips torn from his shirt.

"Well, here is a discovery, and one that will serve me well, if I can find an outlet from this valley by which a horse can go," said Buffalo Bill, and he glanced around him upon the almost fairy spot, with its overhanging hills of precipitous rock, its small grove of trees, the little rivulet, and the cave opening upon it.

Starting at the mouth of the cave, Cody then walked slowly around the inclosure, endeavoring to find some outlet for man or beast, and a look of disappointment crossed his face when he had made the circuit without discovering a single break in the rocky walls.

But presently a fissure was seen, running obliquely from the mouth, and not more than four feet in width.

Following this crevice in the rock, or, rather, tunnel, for a greater part of it was arched over by rocks, he soon came to where the two hills divided at the head of the valley that had been his home.

From above fell a large torrent, which tumbled into the valley below, and, with other streams commingling, formed the river on the banks of which the Hillary cabin had stood.

Far below him he saw the smoking ruins of the home, and even at that distance he could distinguish the dead forms of those he had loved.

Around the ruined scene all was excitement, for the renegade band was preparing to depart, with the captured horses of the settlers loaded down with plunder.

Presently they rode away, and, shaking his clinched fist at them, the scout cried:

"Ay, go on, you bloodhounds, but before many days there will be a bloodhound on your trail who will show you no more mercy than you gave my poor friends."

A few moments more and the bandits disappeared from sight, and Buffalo Bill once more set forth upon his work of discovery.

A hundred feet further on the path abruptly ended, for a deep fissure in the rocks, fully fifteen feet wide, barred his progress.

Upon the other side, however, was another shelf, and the mouth of a cave, and the scout felt certain there must be some way of getting from there to the valley below, and, determined not to be conquered, he retraced his steps to the acre plot, and with his knife, which had served him so well in his encounter with the panther, he began to cut down several saplings.

It was slow work, but he worked steadily, in spite of the pain of his wounds, and in three hours' time had completed what he had determined should serve him as a bridge.

Shouldering the long poles, he bore them to the spot where his way had been stopped, and, with his shirt cut in strips, bound them together.

It was a dangerous and fragile barrier between life and death, for a misstep on the shaky structure would hurl him a hundred feet below; but carefully he ventured, and safely crossed to the other side.

Boldly entering the cavern, he found it was a tunnelway similar to the one he had already traversed, and led him, at one place, around the edge of a precipice, on a shelf hardly four feet wide.

Below him were the tops of the trees, and he knew to fall off would be instant death.

"Yet a horse can be trained to follow this path, for it is sufficiently wide," he muttered, taking in the advantages as well as the disadvantages of his discoveries.

Again the path led into a narrow passage between two lofty hills, and, descending gradually as it went, he soon came to where a small stream flowed into the cañon.

But it was shallow and did not bar his progress, being little over ankle deep.

Rapidly the passageway of the stream descended, until, turning a rocky corner, a cry of delighted surprise burst from the scout's lips as he beheld before him the main stream of the river that wound through the valley.

"Thank God, I have made this discovery!" he cried, and a few steps more brought him to the river bank, along which bordered a path he had often

traversed, but never before suspecting that the little stream, from which he had time and time again quenched his thirst, flowed through a rocky passageway that led entirely through the range of hills which sheltered the valley.

"Yes, this shall be my retreat, for a horse can easily traverse every step of the way to the cave on the other side, which I will make my home; and I defy even the most cunning Indian trailer to track me, and if I was followed I can hold the place against a hundred men."

Then Buffalo Bill strode at a quick step along the pathway leading down the valley.

Oscar Hillary and his beautiful wife, six years before the scenes enacted in the opening chapter of this story, had come to the Southwest border to find a new home.

The cause of their coming none knew, for upon that subject both the husband and wife were peculiarly reticent.

Once, however, they had possessed wealth, and perhaps it was the loss of his property that had caused Oscar Hillary to seek a home on the frontier, bringing his refined and lovely wife from the midst of civilization to a life of hardship and danger in the land of the hostile Indian.

Yet Mrs. Hillary never murmured, and when they joined a wagon train of emigrants, she "put her shoulder to the wheel" and worked with the same will as did the less refined, but good-hearted, wives and daughters of the other men.

The valley where they had at last settled was selected on account of its numerous advantages for agricultural pursuits and stock raising, besides being in an Indian land where the natives were friendly to white settlers.

With marked taste and comfort Oscar Hillary built his cabin, and, with several old family servants, who had followed his fortunes, he soon had a home on the frontier that was the envy of all who saw it.

With open-handed generosity toward all, the Hillarys soon became most popular with their fellow-emigrants, the hunters who came that way, and the friendly Indians; and, if not happy, they were content.

Guy was their only son, and his parents were as careful to have him devote himself to his studies as to his guns and horses.

And Guy was a good student, though he passed

the greater part of his time in hunting wild animals and chasing wild mustangs, always accompanied by his dark shadow, Tony, who shirked all kinds of work, but would run half-a-day long to get a shot at any animal whose skin he could turn to profit.

Thus Guy Hillary grew up to his nineteenth year, and, a successful trapper, he had saved up a number of valuable skins, which he carried to a distant town and sold at a fair profit.

His successes in this line made him most enthusiastic in his work, and he daily accumulated, with the aid of Tony, a number of rare skins.

Also a fine horseman, he frequently would bring down a buffalo, and, having become an expert in throwing a lasso, he was wont to catch wild mustang colts upon the prairie, and, training them thoroughly, would turn them into a marketable commodity, using them on the trip to the settlement as pack horses to carry his skins.

CHAPTER LXXXVIII.

THE SCOUT LIFE-SAVER.

While thus growing up to man's estate Guy Hillary, who had won the title of the Boy Hunter, first met Buffalo Bill.

It was upon one of his expeditions with Tony that a band of hostile Apaches had been met with, and but for the appearance upon the scene of the great army scout, Buffalo Bill, then on duty in that part of the country, the youth and the negro would have been slain.

Single-handed, at the risk of certain death, it seemed, Buffalo Bill had attacked the Indians, slain several of them and wounded the others.

Guy would have Buffalo Bill accompany him to his home, and from that day the Hillary home was as his own, while he was regarded as a loved member of the household, for all knew how much they owed to the great scout.

Upon one of his scouts upon the prairie, Buffalo Bill had met a wagon-train of prairie men, returning from Mexico after a most successful sale of their goods.

In an engagement with some Comanche Indians their two guides had been killed, and also a number of their horses.

He suggested that they should accompany him to the Hillary home, where they would get horses

for their train and fresh supplies, and then promised to guide them to the nearest town on the trail.

They willingly accepted the offer, and that night encamped in the valley, where every kindness was shown them.

Having fully refitted with horses, and obtained what supplies they needed, the prairie men again set forth, with their guide at their head.

For two days all went well, and then, when in the midst of a boundless prairie, Buffalo Bill suddenly discovered that they were entrapped, for the whole east was a wall of flaming fire, from which there appeared no escape.

"Form a corral of the wagons, and protect yourselves as best you can!" cried the scout, and eagerly the traders acted upon his advice.

Rapidly the flames came on; it was impossible for the six wagons to protect the horses also, and they were turned loose to save themselves, if they could.

Like an avalanche of fire the mad flames rolled on, and low crouched the terrified men beneath their frail barrier.

Away darted the poor horse, then, in mad speed, and the wall of fire was upon the wagons, cracking, roaring, scorching as it hovered momentarily at the obstruction in its way.

The white tilts of the wagons were torn off in burning threads, the woodwork was charred, and the heat to the group of human beings was intense.

But it did not last long, and the wall of fire passed on, but leaving a wreck of the wagon-train.

From their shelter beneath the wagon crept the men, and sadly they gazed around them, though thankful for their own lives.

To continue was impossible, with their golden treasure, and so it was agreed to bury it, and, under the guidance of Buffalo Bill, a safe spot was found, and the traders moved on, intending to return with a train for their riches when they reached the nearest settlement.

The next day they came upon two hunters who were going to the settlement, and here the scout left them, with many thanks and a rich reward for his services.

Footsore and weary, the scout walked on to reach the Hillary home, to come at nightfall upon a broken-down wagon upon the prairie, and apparently deserted.

In that wagon, asleep, was a young girl of apparently fifteen years, with a wealth of golden hair.

With surprise the scout gazed upon the beautiful creature, and his look awoke her, and she sprang up with a cry of terror, turning her wild, blue eyes upon him with dread.

A few kind words from the scout reassured her, and, looking intently into his face, she trusted him, and said faintly:

"Oh, I'm so tired and hungry!"

Instantly he gave her food from his haversack, and while she was eating tried to learn from her why she was there; but some strange shock had come upon her, and she could only remember that the wagon-train had been attacked by Indians, and many of the people had been slain, while she had fled away and hidden in the long prairie grass, and lay there until morning.

Then all day she had wandered, until, coming upon the broken-down wagon, she had crawled in it to sleep.

That night the scout wrapped her in his own blanket, and when morning broke the two started for the valley settlement, where they arrived completely tired out and almost famished, for they had had nothing to eat since the night before.

Gladly did Mrs. Hillary and her husband receive the little waif of the prairie into their household, and, by no reference to the past, endeavor to make her forget the terrible scenes she had witnessed, and in time Daisy became a pet with all, for she had lovely manners and was as beautiful as a prairie flower.

Guy Hillary considered her his *protégée*, and taught her to ride and how to shoot a rifle and revolver, until she became quite a proficient marks-woman, and would daringly mount any of the half-wild mustangs the youth was training.

One day Daisy accompanied Guy on a gallop over the prairie, and, returning after nightfall, they came suddenly upon two horsemen, leading after them several horses.

Not recognizing the men, Guy called out to them, and was answered by an oath and a shot.

Instantly he returned the fire, and one of the men fell dead, while his companion, releasing the led horses, darted away across the prairie.

From that day Guy Hillary became a hero on the border, for the man he had slain was recognized as

the lieutenant of El Sol, and a most terrible desperado.

A short while after rumors were afloat that the Comanches were on the warpath, for a number of depredations had been committed along the frontier. To warn his friends of danger, Buffalo Bill was on his way when this story opens.

CHAPTER LXXXIX.

BUFFALO BILL'S OATH.

When Buffalo Bill left the hills, he wended his way slowly along, his face growing paler as he approached the spot where the ruins of the cabin alone remained.

A walk of fifteen minutes, and he stopped short, for before him lay the unburied remains, their cold and ghastly faces clothed with blood stains.

It was the beautiful face upon which a cruel death had placed its seal; a refined, lovely face, youthful, and with an expression of almost childlike innocence.

But the light of the beautiful eyes had gone forever, the gold-brown hair was matted and gory, and a bullet wound in the white bosom showed that the poor mother had been ruthlessly shot down, while with a shudder of horror the scout beheld that the scalplock had been torn away.

Suddenly he arose, his face cold, hard, and stern, all the sorrow he felt having given place to a look of deadly determination.

With quick, nervous tread he walked to where the father lay; a tall, handsome man, with a long, flowing beard.

Then he looked about him and beheld the bodies of others with whom he had passed so many happy hours.

Alas! they had all fallen by the rifle or knife, and all bore the hellish mark of the savage upon their head—the scalplock was gone.

"But where is Daisy? I almost dread, after all I have seen, to gaze into her dead face," he murmured, and nervously he walked about, carefully scrutinizing the slain.

"No, that is not Daisy, but it is Mrs. Moore, and there is little Bertie.

"And poor Tom Henderson lies here; oh! my God! what devilish work for human beings to be guilty of!"

And thus he went from one to the other, until he had gazed into the faces of all who had been slain, faces he knew so well.

"But where is Daisy?" he murmured; and after a while he added, "and Nettie Moore, and her sister? By Heaven! El Sol, I believe you have borne them away as prisoners, for they were all young and pretty.

"If so, I have another death-hold upon you, and I pray God to aid me to hunt you and your band off the face of His beautiful, green earth."

But he had determined upon his course, and after considerable search he found a spade among the rubbish the bandits had cast aside.

With this he went to work, and, forgetful of his wounds, worked untiringly for hours digging a number of shallow graves in the dark, rich earth, in the glade where the night before he had been held as a prisoner.

Then he collected the bodies of the Hillarys and laid them side by side and carefully covered them over, after which he brought to the same spot the remains of the other slain and buried them with the same care, placing each family in a separate grave.

Night came on ere his work was finished, but still he struggled on, and the silvery moon poured her light upon him.

Soon all was finished, the graves were each one marked, and then he thought of himself, and sought around for food.

He found some buffalo meat which the bandits had cast aside, and, cutting off pieces of this, he ate voraciously for some time, after which he sought the river and quenched his thirst.

Food he had had, such as it was, but sleep he most needed; and, remembering that one small house up the valley, a log structure for hay and fodder, had escaped the general conflagration, he sought it, and crept into it for shelter.

It was a delightful haven of refuge, for there was a loft filled with soft hay, and there he could rest free of danger from the wolves, who, having scented blood, howled mournfully around the valley.

Seeking a comfortable spot, he almost instantly dropped off into a deep slumber, unmindful of the sorrows that had befallen him, and the pain of his wounds, received in his encounter with the panther in the cave.

So prostrated was the scout with fatigue and loss of blood that the night passed away ere he awoke from his deep slumber.

The sun was shining brightly outside, the birds were chirping merrily in the trees, and momentarily he did not recall his sad losses, and his face was serene.

But then the past flashed upon him, the blood forsook his face, and it became hard and stern.

Springing down from his perch, he was about to step out from the small log barn, when the hoof-treads of a horse startled him, and caused him to draw back.

Glancing through a crack, his face flushed quickly, for his eyes fell upon a horseman approaching.

A glad light shot then into his eyes, for in the rider he recognized one of the renegade band—in the animal he bestrode, he beheld his own noble bay steed, Flash.

At a cautious pace the man approached, his eyes glancing quickly around him, and with joy Buffalo Bill saw that he was coming directly toward the log hut.

"Oh, that I had a rifle or pistol! but I will spring upon him with my knife," and he drew his jack-knife, clasping it firmly in his right hand.

Twice the horseman slowly passed the door, and, riding up to it, glanced within.

Like a statue stood the scout on one side of the entrance, and then, leaning far over from his horse, the renegade attempted to get a better view of the interior, evidently not caring to dismount until he was certain the hut contained no enemy.

As his cruel face peered into the aperture, a strong hand suddenly seized his throat, and he was dragged from his saddle across the log entrance.

Once, twice, thrice, the keen knife was driven into the hard heart.

"My first victim! and more shall fall!"

One glance upon the man at his feet, and he saw that he was dead.

"Now, I'll see what brought you back here alone; evidently you have hidden some booty you feared to let your comrades know you had—oh! I have it, you searched me, and you have my belt of gold!"

Quickly the scout searched through the hay, and presently came upon his belt of gold, with another batch of the precious metal rolled up in a handkerchief.

"Now I will seek my horse; dear, good, old Flash, to bring this devil right into my clutches."

So saying, he stripped the dead renegade of the arms he wore, which were his own revolvers and knife, that the robber had taken from him, and then gave a loud, shrill whistle.

A distant neigh answered, and immediately the dark bay came galloping up, only too glad to hear once more his master's call.

CHAPTER XC.

THE PRAIRIE WHIRLWIND.

"Well, old fellow, we are companions once more; oh, here is my own rifle strapped to the saddle, and my lasso; all complete, and ready for the war trail.

"Ha! what is that?"

The sound that had attracted his attention was like a subdued roll of thunder.

But instantly his quick and practiced ear detected the course of the sound, and he cried:

"A drove of wild mustangs from the prairie, as I live."

Springing into his saddle, the scout wheeled his horse and glanced through the trees out upon the prairie.

A low, joyous whistle, followed by a chuckle, was the result, while his face sparkled with delight as he said:

"It is the drove of the Prairie Whirlwind.

"Oh, if I could catch that black stallion, I would defy every horse on these plains to catch me.

"Be quiet, Flash, or you will spoil all; and don't be jealous, for your fame would be as great as mine if we caught the Prairie Whirlwind."

On came the drove of wild mustangs, directly toward the glade, and in the direction of the log hut, behind which he awaited with anxious impatience.

Approaching slowly to the glade, the wild herd halted, and eagerly peered before them; but, as if sensing danger, they came on at a cautious trot, evidently heading for the river bank to quench their thirst.

Soon they had passed through the glade, and at a trot were crossing the open plot of land on which the log hut stood, giving it, however, a wide berth, as if dreading that it concealed an enemy.

It was a beautiful, stirring sight, as they trotted

along, with flowing tail and mane, and the sunlight glancing upon almost every variety of color of black, sorrel, bay, white, brown, roan, and hues too numerous to mention.

The leader of the wild drove was a perfectly-formed black stallion, the largest of the herd, and at a glance discovered to be the most magnificent animal of the lot.

The forelock, mane and tail were jet black, and exceedingly long, the jaws had never been subdued by the bit, the back never pressed by the saddle.

He was a free rover, a monarch of the prairie, who for several years had defied all attempts at capture, although as many as four score enemies at a time had endeavored to entrap him with the fastest horses.

A desert-born, equine king, he had nobly held his own, and his speed had won for him the name of the Prairie Whirlwind.

His every movement indicated strength, his build was that of a thoroughbred racer, and his keen eye and expanded nostrils proved endurance and courage.

His hide was satinlike in softness, jet black, and every limb muscular and perfect in symmetry, while his small, well-shaped head, delicate ears and gaunt body were indicative of the best prairie "blood."

Was it a wonder, then, that Buffalo Bill longed to capture the Prairie Whirlwind?

With reins well in his left hand, his circled lasso in his right, and seated firmly in his saddle, he awaited patiently, yet full of excitement, for the mustangs to reach the river, gradually drawing his horse back to keep the log hut between him and the drove.

Suddenly the Prairie Whirlwind halted, his head was upraised, and his blood-red nostrils loudly snuffed the air; but as if reassured, he moved on to the river, and bent his proud head to the water, while the cavalcade clustered around him, eager to quench their thirst.

Like an arrow shot the noble Flash forth from his concealment, and the clatter of his rushing hoofs startled the wild mustangs, who turned in confusion to fly.

With savage bounds the Prairie Whirlwind burst through the cavalcade, and attempted to dash by the daring horseman, his eyes flashing, his nostrils expanded, his white teeth glittering.

But with a firm and strong hand the lasso was

thrown, the coil settled down over the proud head, and Flash, well trained to his duty, threw himself back upon his haunches, a tremendous jerk upon the lariat, and Prairie Whirlwind was thrown to the ground.

One loud, long, exultant yell broke from Buffalo Bill as he leaped to the ground, freed the lariat from his saddle, and quickly formed a "bow stall," which is more effective than a severe curb bit.

Then, loosening the noose around the neck, the mustang king at once began to recover from the effects of his choking, and struggled to his feet, but with a snort of terror he darted forward, for Buffalo Bill had nimbly sprung upon his back.

Savagely he shook his head to rid himself of the bow stall, and then in sheer surprise stood momentarily still.

But only for an instant, and then he realized he was in the hands of an enemy, and bounded high into the air, then sprang forward with prodigious leaps.

Changing his tactics, the stallion then reared, and became almost upright, but with catlike tenacity his daring rider clung on, and the steed was baffled once more, to, the next moment, attempt to tear the enemy from his back with his gleaming teeth.

A severe jerk upon the bow stall thwarted this savage plan, and with a cry of terror the maddened prairie king bounded forward in full pursuit of the drove of mustangs, fully a mile distant upon the prairie, and rapidly flying away.

A shrill call to his horse, and Flash came swiftly behind.

Like a perfect whirlwind the mad animal rushed on, and the ground under his feet seemed to fly from beneath him, and with joyous excitement Buffalo Bill kept his seat, for the stallion was rapidly overhauling the flying herd, and in spite of his great speed Flash was being left far behind, although he had only the weight of the saddle to bear.

When Buffalo Bill lassoed the Prairie Whirlwind he little knew that he had three spectators to his bold act, who were coming down the pathway of the hills when they beheld him dart forward upon his prey.

One of the three was an Indian brave of scarcely twenty; a tall, well-formed son of the prairie, riding a half-wild mustang, and armed with a short rifle, lance and hunting knife.

The face of the young Indian was strikingly handsome, determined, and with a look of nobleness in it seldom seen in his cruel race.

He was dressed as a Comanche warrior, wore full war paint, and in luxuriant masses his hair hung down his back and rested upon his shoulders.

Besides the weapons already spoken of he carried a bow and quiver of arrows hung at his back, and a horsehair lariat hung from his low saddle.

Behind him came two persons with whom the reader is already acquainted, one of them being Minne-Blue-Eyes, the Indian maiden, mounted upon a clean-limbed and handsome mustang, and the other that black worthy, Tony, who, when last seen, was following the scout at full speed in the direction of the valley.

But Tony's horse was not as swift-footed as was Flash, and, arriving upon the hill, the negro boy discovered that Buffalo Bill had recklessly darted into the midst of the renegades and been made prisoner.

"Dat's no place for dis here hansome chile, I done tole you; so I gits.

"But whar's I goin'?"

"Golly! I'll never grow no more, case I'se so skeert.

"Oh, Lord in heben, j'st guide dis belubbed lamb of you'n, case he don't want to be skulped by de Injuns."

So said Tony, seated upon his horse, a perfect object of abject terror.

At last, after another careful scrutiny of the fiends in the valley, and their devilish work, Tony continued:

"Wid de blessin' ob' de Lord, I'se goin' to dig, case dis here ain't no place for 'spectable cullud pus-sun like I is, now dat Massa Bill gone and done got cotched.

"So I just leab dis diggins, and I go see dat Injun man dat dey call White Wolf, and he will help me get Massa Bill out of dem black debils' hands."

So saying, Tony wheeled his horse and darted away, taking a trail leading along the base of the hills.

After a ride of ten miles he turned up into the hills, and in a sheltered spot suddenly came upon an Indian village, nestled snugly away.

The village contained some half a hundred lodges, and was the regular home of a tribe of the Comanche nation, who for a number of years had been

on peaceful terms with the white settlers along the border, especially with their near neighbors in the valley.

"Don't shoot, Massa Injun; it's only poor nigger boy," yelled out Tony, as he beheld the form of a warrior in the moonlight.

The Indian seemed reassured, and approached the trembling Tony, who quickly said, striving to imitate the Indian style of speaking:

"Me no enemy! me big black chief; me full blood! love Injun heap! Injun's friend."

"Ugh!" was the only reply of the warrior; and Tony, not thinking he had made as favorable an impression as he desired, continued:

"You big red chief! me little black chief——"

"Black nigger heap fool," suddenly interrupted the Indian, and Tony humbly answered:

"Yas, Massa Injun wise man."

"Ugh! me great brave; me scalp much; nigger scalp no good much; dam bad."

"Yas, Massa, it dam bad skulp for big Injun chief; it dam good skulp for dis nigger chile, dough, de best he got, he, he!" added Tony.

"What nigger want?" suddenly asked the warrior.

"Me want to see de big young chief, White Wolf."

"Who asks for White Wolf, the brother of Minne-Blue-Eyes?" asked a sweet voice, in good English, and the Indian maiden approached the spot where Tony awaited.

In a few words Tony told why he had come, and, telling him to await her coming, the young girl strode quickly away, and soon returned mounted upon a small, wiry mustang, and armed with her rifle.

"Let the blackface go on to the camp of the white warriors, and tell them that El Sol is in the valley.

"White Wolf is away on the warpath of the Apaches, but Minne-Blue-Eyes will go and save the paleface brave, for he saved her life." The maiden spoke with strange decision for one so young.

"Lor' bress your soul, Missy Blue-Eyes; don't you dare done down yonder, for de dam cusses will cut you up into sausage meat, and den kill you beside."

"Minne-Blue-Eyes has spoken; she goes to save the paleface chief.

"Let the blackface go for the white warriors."

"Just as you say, Missy Blue-Eyes—I'se off like a shot," replied Tony, and away he went to the fort after a squadron of soldiers, for, having been on the

prairies almost constantly with Guy, he knew the country well.

Watching him depart, Minne-Blue-Eyes then set forth for the valley, and that her daring enterprise was crowned with success the reader has already seen.

In the meantime the faithful Tony sped on, and at daylight he arrived at the fort, to find that all the available troops were on a scout to the northward.

Halting just long enough to rest and feed his horse, Tony set forth upon his return, to aid as best he could, for, in spite of his peculiarities, he was, at least, as brave as a desert lion, as Guy had more than once discovered when the two were in danger together.

Directing his steps first to the Indian village, to discover what Minne-Blue-Eyes had accomplished, for he had great faith in her powers, Tony arrived late in the night, to learn Buffalo Bill was free.

With joy at his heart at the escape of the scout, and completely broken down, as was also his horse, Tony willingly accepted the invitation extended him by the Indian girl to remain in the village, and was soon fast asleep.

The next morning White Wolf returned, and, having heard what had transpired in the valley, he determined to at once set forth, and Minne-Blue-Eyes and Tony accompanied him.

The young warrior was the son of the chief of the tribe, and the most promising young brave of his village, and between himself and the scout there existed a warm friendship, for once his paleface brother, as he called him, had warned his village of a raid to be made upon it by a roving band of Apaches, and through the battle had nobly remained and fought for his red neighbors.

Another time Buffalo Bill had saved the life of Minne-Blue-Eyes by attacking and killing a huge rattlesnake just as he had coiled himself to spring upon the unsuspecting maiden, who was gathering wild berries in the forest.

With this double hold upon him, besides the scout's numerous acts of generosity toward both himself and the pride of the prairie tribes, Minne-Blue-Eyes, it is not to be wondered at that White Wolf was anxious to befriend his paleface friend.

The three friends of Cody had reached within sight of the valley, when they saw him, with surprise, dart forth from behind the log hut, mounted

upon his own horse, and throw his lasso skillfully over the neck of the Prairie Whirlwind.

The three spectators uttered a wild cry of joy, for they all recognized the famous stallion, and had believed it impossible to catch him.

Dashing rapidly down into the valley, they arrived to find Cody far out upon the prairie, and, having passed through the wild drove of mustangs, beheld the flying stallion wildly rushing on far in advance.

"Yonder comes Flash back agin, case he done gin it up, for he ain't got no business wid dat skootin' animile," said Tony, pointing to the dark bay as he came rapidly back toward the glade, neighing wildly, for, as soon as he saw he could not overhaul his black rival, he turned back.

Darting right into their midst, he was secured by Tony, just as a loud yell was heard, and a dozen Apache warriors, in all their grim war paint, were seen rushing upon the little party.

CHAPTER XCI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

The speed of the Prairie Whirlwind, the wild joy at his capture, and pride at having accomplished a feat which had baffled the bravest horsemen of the prairies, caused Buffalo Bill to feel as though he would dare any danger.

Like lightning the noble, terrified animal flew on, his mighty bounds quickly gaining upon the mustangs ahead, and almost before their daring rider was aware, he was in their midst.

With terror the frightened mustangs sheered from his path, though at their speed the stallion swept through the drove as though they were stationary, and soon the leaders were left far behind.

Once upon the open prairie he urged on the splendid animal with voice and a lash from the end of his lasso, gradually the swaying of his body and a steady pull upon the bow stall, guiding the steed toward the hills once more, at a point near the Indian village, the home of Minne-Blue-Eyes.

Glancing backward, the scout discovered that Flash had given up the chase and turned back, and, anxious to bring his new steed under full control, he still urged him on, until he was within half-a-mile of the Indian village.

The sentinels had discovered his approach, and the whole village, warriors, squaws and children,

turned out to behold him, for at a glance they recognized the Prairie Whirlwind, and many a brave felt a twinge of envy to feel that a paleface had done what no red man could do.

Steadily drawing upon his bow stall, Cody gradually slackened the speed of his horse, and then again the enraged animal went through a series of determined struggles for freedom, even throwing himself upon the ground and rolling over to get his rider off.

But Bill, who was up to his tricks, nimbly sprang aside when the stallion lay down, and ere he could regain his feet his rider was once more upon his back.

Once the animal reared and fell backward upon the soft earth, and even the Indians uttered a cry of horror; but Buffalo Bill alighted on his feet, and when the stallion once more sprang up, he again bestrode him.

Like an arrow the steed then bounded away, his speed causing wild cries of wonder from the savage audience, and then the bow stall would again check him, and a series of lofty kicks would follow.

Then mercilessly fell the lasso upon his flanks, and again urged forward, the stallion rushed almost into the midst of the group of admiring Indians, and then was suddenly brought to a halt.

Calmly he stood, his glossy hide covered with foam, his eyes glaring, nostrils expanded, and sides heaving, but a thoroughly conquered horse.

Yell after yell went up from the Indians, and, feeling that he could trust his now thoroughly-tamed steed, the scout sprang to the ground, and, like a hound, the prairie rover-king followed him around.

Addressing a chief who had come forward to greet him, Buffalo Bill asked regarding Tony, and was told that he had left some time before with White Wolf and Minne-Blue-Eyes to go to the valley, and, springing again upon the back of the stallion, he bounded away with the speed of the wind.

Ere the Indians believed he had reached the valley he was again in their midst, and, in quick tones, he cried, in the Comanche tongue:

"Mount, warriors, and follow me; the Apaches are fighting the White Wolf and the Blue-Eyes in the valley."

With wild yells a score of braves sought their arms and horses, and were soon dashing along the hill trail behind the scout.

But, fresh though their horses were, the Prairie Whirlwind would soon have distanced them had not the white rider checked his speed continually.

It was nearly an hour ere the cavalcade reached the valley, and the ring of rifles rang in their ears, proving that the White Wolf still bravely held his own against his foes.

Wheeling round the base of the hill, and armed with a bow and arrows he had borrowed in the Indian village, Buffalo Bill uttered his loud, defiant yell, and gave Whirlwind full rein, as he dashed upon the surprised Apaches, sending arrows right and left in his rapid flight.

Instantly the Apaches began to seek cover, but, discovering the body of Comanches approaching, they darted toward the glade where their horses were tied.

But again the rifles of White Wolf and his companions rang forth from the log hut, and in dismay the frightened enemy knew not which way to fly, and in despair darted into the river.

Swiftly came the avenging Comanches upon them, however, and of the entire band, consisting of a dozen warriors, only two escaped, for half their number had fallen beneath the unerring rifles of White Wolf, Minne-Blue-Eyes and Tony, who had, with their horses, retreated into the log hut when first they beheld their foes rushing upon them.

In vain was it that the Apache warriors had charged upon the little fort; its trio of brave defenders stood firm, and with true aim beat them back, for when the rifles were emptied, Tony drew his revolvers, while White Wolf used the scout's weapons, which the scout had bound to his saddle when he prepared to lasso the stallion.

"Great golly, massa, you is de very debil hisself for riding," cried Tony, rushing toward the scout as he approached the log hut, with Whirlwind quietly following behind him.

Buffalo Bill smiled slightly at the compliment, and warmly grasped the hand of his black friend, while he replied:

"Tony, I have the best horse in the world, and see, he is not tired, although after my rough ride on the prairie, I came down to the valley like the wind to see that you were in trouble, and I went back for reinforcements to the village—ah, Minne-Blue-Eyes, you have had a hard battle, I see, and you, White

Wolf, my friend, have a string of scalps for your belt."

"Yes; me glad see paleface brother; White Wolf have three scalps, Minne-Blue-Eyes have two scalps, and black face have two scalps," said White Wolf, proudly, and then he fastened three scalps to his girdle, handed two more bleeding trophies to Minne-Blue-Eyes, and offered the remaining two to Tony.

"No, tankee, Massa White Wolf, you keep dem for de little papooses, an' tole 'em dat Tony, de big black chief, send 'em to 'em," and Tony respectfully pushed back the hideous trophies he had honorably won in battle.

"Scalps no good for papoose; much good for big brave; take scalps, blackface."

"No, sah, tankee bery much; but gib 'em to your mudder for her back hair, honey," and Tony again motioned the warlocks away, and with a grunt of surprise White Wolf added them to the number already in his girdle.

After a short stay in the valley, the warriors, headed by White Wolf and Minne-Blue-Eyes, took their departure for their village, leaving Buffalo Bill and Tony alone in the midst of the ruins that had once been a happy home, for it was the intention of the scout to at once prepare for the warpath against El Sol and his murderers band of desperadoes.

When the Comanche band had departed, he turned to Tony, and again thanked him for his noble efforts in his behalf, and then made known to him all that had transpired in the valley, from his capture by El Sol, up to his lassoing the black stallion.

The large eyes of the negro filled with tears as he heard the story, and glanced around him upon the ruin that El Sol had left behind, and the mounds that marked the new-made graves.

"What's we gwine to do now, Massa Bill?"

"I'll tell you, Tony; all are gone excepting you; you I have with me, but others are in the power of El Sol."

"Who dat, Massa Bill?"

"Poor Daisy; she was not slain, but spared, I fear, for a worse fate in the end," sadly returned the scout.

"Can't we git her away from de debil, massa?"

"Tony, that is just what I intend to try and do; also I intend to avenge the dead."

"But do you know where Guy Hillary is, for his body I did not find among the dead?"

"He went to de big town settlement, sah, ter git somet'ings fer his mudder."

"Which she will never need; but his going saved him from sharing her fate."

"An' mighty glad I be, sah."

"Yes, indeed; for he is a brave, splendid boy, and will join us in our work of revenge."

"Yes, Massa Bill, so he kin."

"De good book do say to leaf vengeance to de Lord, but I guess it take too long an' we kin gib Him a helpin' hand, sah."

"I am sure that we can, Tony, and we must find Guy; but my God! what a story we have to tell him."

"Now, Tony, listen to me."

"Yes, sah, I am hearin' all yer says."

After a few moments of silence, in which Buffalo Bill was lost in deep meditation, while Tony watched him almost with a look of awe, the scout said:

"In the cave where I told you that I fought the panther is to be our home, for from it are two passages, one by the tree, the way I went up, and the other through the hills, and by which we can carry our horses."

"You don't tole me so?"

"Yes, Tony, I found it out yesterday; well, my plan is this:

"First, to uncache the stores poor Mr. Hillary buried, and which these renegade devils did not find."

"In that underground storeroom, you know, are provisions in plenty, ammunition, blankets, ropes, and all that we could desire."

"With the ropes I intend to make a ladder to let down over the ledge at the mouth of the cave, and we can haul up that way plenty of firewood, and also some stout sticks to build a bridge for our horses, and one which we can take up or put down as we need it across the ravine."

"The blankets will serve us well, especially in winter, and the provisions and ammunition will last us a long time, while the horses will have a nice plot to feed upon, and cannot stray away."

"Golly, dis is fine, massa; won't we live splendid?"

"We will live in security, Tony, and the whole of El Sol's band will not be able to drive us from our retreat, even if they can find us, which I believe impossible."

"Now, let us to work."

A short distance back of the ruined cabin Buffalo

Bill began to dig up the loose dirt, and soon came upon a kind of subterranean storeroom, which the foresight of Oscar Hillary had placed there, in case of their being burned out of house and home by the Indians.

As fast as they took the stores out they packed them upon the horses, Whirlwind calmly submitting to his fate like the other steeds.

Having taken all they could carry, they set off for the upper glade, and soon halted at the base of the tree by which the scout had climbed to the cave the day before.

"Here, Tony, these wounds in my shoulder are very sore, and you'll have to shinny up the tree."

"All right, Massa Bill; I jist git up dat tree like a Thomas cat goin' to visit he sweetheart," and, taking the end of a small rope in his mouth, Tony soon demonstrated his ability to climb, and before long stood upon the ledge.

Rolling the stores in a large blanket, with the four ends tied together, the scout attached the rope and steadily Tony drew them up.

A dozen loads thus went up to the cave, and Tony, descending, they once more returned to the storehouse, and took from it all that remained therein.

In like manner these were taken up to the cave, and then the two set to work, with axes they found in the storehouse, chopping down small trees, considered suitable for a bridge across the ravine.

These were then hauled up, one by one, to the ledge, and then they stopped for supper, and made a good meal off of smoked buffalo meat and crackers, after which they retired into the glade to pass the night.

They slept soundly, and awoke with the first streak of dawn, greatly refreshed.

"Come, Tony; let us eat our breakfast and get to work."

"Ise willin', Massa Bill," and the faithful negro sprang to his feet.

Then from the settlement they collected all that could be found of any value, and, having hauled it up to the cave, returned for the hay, corn and fodder which was in the log hut, and which the scout knew would come in well for the horses.

The transferring of this was no small work, for there was a quantity of provender, and, being anxious to cover up his tracks, Buffalo Bill was particu-

lar that no straw or blade of fodder should betray him.

It was late in the afternoon before the horses were loaded for the last time, and then Buffalo Bill led the way by his new-found passage.

Great was the surprise of Tony as he followed into the secret and wonderful passageway, and he continually was saying as they went along, leading their heavily-loaded horses:

"Well, I declar; dis am de debil's own road."

Coming to the ravine, the horses were halted and tied, and, crossing the frail structure which he had constructed the day before, the scout went on to the cave, and in an hour's time, with their newly-cut timber, ropes, nails, and the boards of old boxes, they had made a most respectable bridge, fifteen feet in length by three and a half in width.

This movable bridge was so constructed that with ropes it could be raised up or lowered at will.

Calling to Whirlwind to follow him, the noble animal instinctively obeyed, crossing the seemingly frail structure without the slightest hesitation.

Flash came next, but not without considerable fear and trembling, and with Injun, as Tony had named his horse, they had considerable trouble; but at last the three horses were safely over, and at dark were browsing the luxuriant grass on the plot in front of the cave, or slaking their thirst in the crystal waters of the rivulet.

"Well, I do declar, dis am a part of hebben, I tink; case you see, massa, we done got place for de horses, and Injun am as happy as a flea on a dog, bress him.

"Den we got fine storehouse, all fixt up for us, and nice back door to get out ob, if de debil come in at de front door, which we has, too; and den dere's de ribulet for to drink and make de coffee, and de blankets to sleep on, and plenty ob wood to burn, and lots ob hay, and de provisions for us to eat, and de oven and de tin kettle to cook in, and de ammunition to kill de dam Injuns wid, and de—but, Massa Bill, you done sartin dis here cave ain't hanted?" and as Tony asked the question he suddenly dropped the confident tone he had used in enumerating the luxuries and advantages of their new home into a subdued whisper, while his eyes rolled restlessly around.

"We can see nothing here, Tony, worse than we saw in the valley; but we must not think of such

things, so let us make a fire and then set our house in order."

With some degree of his old cheerfulness, Buffalo Bill then went to work, and with a bright fire burning in the mouth of the cave opening upon the green plot—a "front yard," as Tony called it—their rocky home presented a most cheerful aspect, for the interior was roomy and dry, and a separate apartment was sufficiently large for half-a-dozen horses in case of bad weather.

Three days thus passed away, and the two avengers had made of their rocky retreat a most comfortable home, and it was with considerable pleasure that the scout glanced around him, and then said:

"All we want now, Tony, is a dog and a cat."

"I'se gwine to steal a dog de next time I go to de Injun village, and I see Miss Daisy's old Tabby runnin' round de valley de udder day, and I go down and call her 'kitty, kitty, kitty,' and cotch her, Massa Bill."

"Well, Tony, you can catch old Tabby, but if you ask Blue-Eyes for a dog she will give you one, and you won't have to steal it."

"It am easier to steal de dog, massa; but I ask her if you say so."

"Well, Tony, I wish you would; now I must rub up my rifle and pistols, for to-morrow I start on the trail of El Sol and his band."

"Yes, sah; but it gittin' time for Massa Guy to be comin' home, as he done tole me come back Saturday."

"Ah! then we must head him off on the trail; but this is the only home the poor boy will find, for he has no home now, and we are all there are to give him welcome," and the eyes of the brave man were dimmed with tears.

But he added, in a stern voice:

"But he can aid in our plots to avenge his loved ones, Tony, and to rescue Miss Daisy and any other captives El Sol may have."

CHAPTER XCII.

IN THE HOME OF THE OUTLAW.

From the once peaceful and happy valley settlement, the scene of my story now changes into the mountain region where El Sol and his outlaw band have their retreat, and where none have ever dared to track them.

When leaving the valley, El Sol, with a small escort of Indians and whites, dashed rapidly on ahead, leaving the plunder-laden animals and the remainder of the band to follow more leisurely.

It was nearly sunset ere the chief ascended the mountain, in the recesses of which was his home, his fort where he could defy his enemies.

Up a narrow and rocky trail the way led, along the edge of a precipice, where a single false footing would hurl the careless rider or pedestrian hundreds of feet below.

But El Sol rode along with a reckless air, which proved that he had no fear, or was thoroughly aware that his horse would nobly stand the test.

At length a lofty plateau was reached, from which the view was unsurpassed for mile and miles around.

The plateau was heavily wooded in parts, and in other places was open, while a large stream wound its way along the base of a range of hills that bounded it to the north.

Scattered here and there along the banks of the stream were the rude cabins of the outlaws, and dotting the open land of the plateau were hundreds of horses, mules and cattle.

In front of the cabins lounged a motley crowd of men, women and a few young children, all of the females and youngsters being mostly Mexicans or Indian squaws, and fully as evil-looking as were the men.

In a distant motte was the cabin home of El Sol, so situated as to command a view of the entire plateau, and thither the chief wended his way, while his followers, who had acted as an escort, turned off toward the lower huts, where their arrival was greeted by a wild yell, as soon as those who had not gone upon the expedition learned of the great success that had attended the band.

The cabin of the chief was of heavy logs, comprising four rooms, each divided from the other by a wide passageway, or hall, and all being under the same roof.

A large but rude piazza encircled the house, giving it the appearance of a Southern plantation home, and altogether it was far from being uncomfortable.

Around the piazza were trained clinging vines, and in front of the doorsteps were numerous flowers that displayed careful attention, while at the front windows were white dimity curtains, all proving that some feminine hand ruled the household.

Standing upon the piazza, as the chief approached, was a woman dressed in pure white.

It was a lovely face that was turned toward the coming chief; one of those subdued, sad faces that show a sympathetic and noble heart.

Apparently not more than thirty years of age, there was yet a look of intense sadness resting upon every feature that made her look perhaps older.

But the features were carved with delicacy and refinement, and the figure was slight and graceful.

The dark, sorrowful eyes gazed wistfully upon El Sol as he rode up, and a sweet smile of welcome swept over her face as, dismounting, he threw her a kiss.

"Well, Violet, I am back again, and safe, you see," said Sol, in a strangely soft voice for one of his nature to use.

"Yes, brother, and I am glad to see you, for it is very lonely here without you," and the woman shuddered slightly as, leaning forward to receive the chief's caress, she saw a blood stain upon his jacket.

"You were in an engagement, brother?"

"Yes, Violet; we met the enemy and defeated them with ease; but you must not ask me any more questions, sister mine, about my wild life, and it would only pain you to hear of deeds of bloodshed and strife. Come, I have had nothing to eat since early morning, and am almost famished," and the chief assumed a playful tone.

"Oh, brother Sol! if you would cease your life of turmoil, how happy I would be.

"Think, Sol, you have nothing to live for now but me, for father, mother, all are gone, and I have only you.

"Listen to me, Sol, and turn from your cruel life.

"Once you were noble, good, all that man could be, and now——"

"Now I am an outlaw, Violet, the chief of a band of renegades and Indians, and you are all that I love in the world.

"True, there was once a time, long years ago, when we were children together, that I abhorred wrong; but then a woman, one whom I loved above all else, played me false, and——"

"No, Sol, she did not play you false; she admired and respected you, but did not love you."

"Curses rest on her and upon her memory; ay, and my embittered curse fall on him who came be-

tween me and her love, and curses descend upon his name.

"Once I loved her, now I hate her; ay, and I hate her memory!"

"Is she dead, brother, that you speak so?"

"Yes, Violet, she is dead, and—but never mind; no more. I am fatigued and in ill-humor, so please see that Huldah has supper for me."

Sadly the beautiful woman turned away, and like a caged lion El Sol paced the room, his lips set, his brow dark and stern.

At length his sister returned, and bade him come out to supper, and, dismissing the cloud from his face, he followed her into one of the back rooms, where an old colored woman, Huldah, had prepared for him a substantial repast, consisting of broiled buffalo steaks, hot coffee and biscuit.

Heartily El Sol partook of his supper, sitting long at the table, and telling his sister of various pieces of news he had picked up in his week's absence from the stronghold.

At length one of his under officers entered and reported the arrival of the remainder of the band, with the captives, all that had escaped the terrible valley massacre.

"Pasquez, bring those girls into my room, for I would see them," and then, turning to his sister, he resumed:

"Violet, if you care for one of these girls as a companion, you can take your choice."

"Thank you, brother; but the others?"

"Must be drawn for by lot among the band."

"Oh! Heaven have mercy!"

"Sol, brother, would you sanction the perpetration of such an outrage?" and the sad eyes flashed fire.

"It is the law of the band, Violet; come, would you see the captives?"

"Yes; I would save them," and the beautiful woman followed her brother into the next room, to await the coming of the unfortunate maidens who had fallen into the hands of the merciless band.

In obedience to the order of his chief, the officer soon returned, accompanied by three girls, the eldest a pretty maiden of seventeen, and her sister of fifteen, daughters of one of the settlers in the valley.

The third was the little Waif of the Prairie, as she was called, and the one whose life had been saved by Buffalo Bill.

Scarcely more than sixteen, she was yet quite ma-

ture for her age, and a more beautiful young face never bent over a prairie flower.

Her form was simply perfect, and the neat homespun dress fitted her well, displaying the graceful form of the child-woman.

But her face was pale, and her eyes rolled furtively about as she entered the room where the chief and his sister were seated.

"My God! my child! my child!"

It was the voice of the beautiful woman that suddenly burst forth, full of pathos and thanksgiving, while, springing to her feet, she tottered toward Daisy, who gave one long look into the lovely face and sprang into her arms, sobbing forth:

"Mamma! oh, mamma, I have found you, and you are not dead!"

"Pasquez, leave the room and carry those two girls with you. Await outside with them until I call you."

The tone of the chief was stern, yet slightly tremulous, and the sub-officer at once withdrew, taking the two sisters with him, and leaving Daisy still folded in her mother's arms.

"Violet, I congratulate you that you have found your daughter; henceforth your clouds will have a silver lining," and El Sol stepped forward and imprinted a kiss upon his sister's forehead.

"Come, my little niece, have you no word for me?" and the chief held forth his hand to Daisy.

But she drew back with a shudder, and said:

"You are the outlaw chief, El Sol; I hate you!"

The dark face of the chief clouded quickly, and an evil glitter shone in his eyes, and his sister said, as she saw it:

"Daisy, this gentleman is my brother, and your uncle, and you must be kind to him, for he has seen much sorrow, but he will always love you."

"I do not want him to love me, mamma, for he is a bad man; he burned the cabins in the valley, and killed those who have ever been friends to me. Now, uncle, tell mamma how wicked you are, for she may not believe you as wicked as I say," and Daisy glanced up fearlessly into the bold, reckless face of El Sol.

"Violet, you must put a curb-bit upon that girl, if you wish me to be civil to her," angrily cried El Sol.

"Sol, she is but a child, and you must bear with her; remember, she has twice witnessed scenes of terrible carnage, saw her father slain before her eyes,

and she believed me also dead; by some miracle she escaped then, and a second time has dire misfortune overtaken her, for those who befriended her, she has just said, had fallen before her face, and had I not been here to befriend her, what would have been her fate?

"Bear with her, Sol, and grant me one request."

"And that is——"

"To give me my child, ay, more, brother, let her young friends go with me, and together we will seek a home in Mexico, where I can devote myself to the poor, lonely children.

"Sol, do this for me, and I will bless you.

"Remember, I have ample means, and with Daisy and her two young companions, we can live away from this constant whirl of strife and carnage.

"Sol, brother, do I plead in vain?"

CHAPTER XCIII.

CONSCIENCE-STRICKEN.

The beautiful woman paused, and raised her tear-dimmed eyes to her brother.

With stern brow he turned away and paced the room.

In memory he lived over the past, from his boyhood to that moment, when he stood, a crime-accursed outlaw, in the presence of his pure sister and her only child.

Thought carried him back to his once happy home on the banks of the Mississippi, where he lived in happiness with his parents and only sister.

Then across his life swept a vision of beauty, the daughter of a neighboring planter, and to her went out the whole idolatrous worship of his strong nature.

Yet she returned not his love, for her heart was already bound up in one whom she had loved from her earliest remembrance.

Kindly, softly she had told him she could not love him, and promised to be his friend; but her words stirred up the demon in his nature, and he swore that if he lost her his rival should never live to claim her.

With jealous rage, the love-maddened man sought that rival, Oscar Hillary, and they met upon the roadside.

A few hot words and Sol Vertner drew his pistol,

and shot his rival down, and then turned to fly, Cain-accursed; but there was one to bar his passage, the brother of the woman whom he loved.

Unheeding the stern order for him to halt, Sol Vertner pressed on; there came the crack of a revolver, and he reeled and fell in his saddle.

But with leonine courage he arose, and a shot from his pistol pierced the unfortunate brother to the heart.

Sol Vertner was taken and thrown into prison, while one of his victims lay dead in his childhood's home, and the other hovered between life and death.

But the strong constitution of Oscar Hillary triumphed over the wound, and he recovered.

Severely wounded himself, it was months before Sol Vertner was brought to trial, and then the testimony of his rival, and that of the woman he loved, for she was summoned as a witness to repeat his threats, condemned him, and he was found guilty, and sentenced to die by hanging.

In vain did his poor parents expend money to save him; in vain did his beautiful sister Violet implore the governor for his pardon—he was doomed to die, so said all.

But when entreaties failed, Violet Vertner changed her plan of action, and by bribery and a woman's strategy, Sol Vertner, one dark, stormy night, left the prison walls, one week before the day set forth for his death.

In spite of every attempt to retake him, Sol Vertner escaped, and was never more heard of in the old familiar haunts.

From bad to worse he went, down hill in wickedness, until he at length found himself the leader of a dreaded band of outlaws.

A strange fatality dogged his footsteps, for Oscar Hillary married the woman for whom he had committed murder, and, unfortunate in his financial affairs, his rival had sought a home on the South-western frontier, to have his presence discovered by Sol Vertner, who bided his time for years, and then cruelly, most barbarously, visited upon him his revenge, but not until he had looked his victims in the face, and shown them who was their barbarous enemy.

Again he recalled one night on the prairie, when he attacked a wagon-train of emigrants, and slew

with his own hand the husband of that noble sister who had rescued him from an ignominious death.

True, he did not know whom it was he slew until afterward, when he recognized the almost lifeless form of Violet.

Then he knew he had killed one of his boyhood friends, one who had stood by him through all, and become the husband of his dearly-loved sister.

It would never do for poor Violet to know that her brother did the foul deed, and he bore her away with the train, the poor woman still lying in a deep swoon.

It was days ere she recovered, to learn how the train had been attacked by a band of Indians, and that Sol Vertner, her long-lost brother, had rescued her from their power.

Of her child he knew nothing, for in her fright Daisy had fled away, not knowing whither, and hidden herself in the tall prairie grass.

Diligent search was made for the little girl, but with no result; and, as her body could not be found, the poor mother believed she yet lived in some Indian camp.

Thus it was Violet became the inmate of the outlaw stronghold, and though, in time, she came to know that her brother was a chief of a band of desperadoes; and perhaps the most crime-stained of them all, she would not desert him, but clung to him through all, pitying him for the clouds that had dimmed the brightness of his life in years gone by.

All these things, and more, his recent crimes, flitted through the mind of El Sol as he paced the floor in deep and painful thought.

"Can I refuse her all she asks?"

"No; she shall have her way, and I will guide her across the Mexican frontier, and in some large town she can make her home."

Then turning to the patiently awaiting sister, who clasped her recovered daughter close to her heart, he said:

"Violet, I will do as you wish.

"You are free to depart with your daughter and the other girls whenever you see fit."

"Sol, brother, God will bless you for this act," said Violet, and she bowed her head in joy, and wept like a child.

CHAPTER XCIV.

THE THREE AVENGERS.

Leaving their cave the next day, Buffalo Bill and Tony made their way first to the settlement with the charred ruins and graves.

They placed some wild roses they had gathered on the way upon the graves, and then took the trail by which they knew Guy Hillary must return from the distant town to which he had gone.

"He would return here, Tony, even if he had heard of the awful deeds of El Sol, and what would await him," said Buffalo Bill.

"Yas, sah, he sartin ter come, Massa Bill; so it's safe ter camp on ther trail," answered the negro, and he added:

"You hab ter tell him dat dey all is dead, sah, an' dat El Sol done caught poor Miss Daisy."

"I will tell him, Tony, though I would rather lose an arm than have it to do.

"We'll camp on this trail, and at night take turns in watching—no, I'll take the night watch."

Tony laughed and replied:

"Yas, sah; you t'ink dis nigger go ter sleep when night come."

"You read my thoughts, Tony."

"I is sleepyhead, sah; but not when I scared at Injuns."

They found a good camping-place on a hill, from which the trail by which Guy Hillary was to come, would be in full view, and where there was good grass for the horses, and wood and water.

That night Buffalo Bill stood guard, and he heard the tramp of hoofs.

There were several horses, and he ran to a point near the trail and laid down in the grass, to get a

view of them as they passed, for the moon had risen and they were going in a direction in which they would surely meet Guy Hillary.

"They are some of El Sol's men, I feel certain. By Heaven! but that man in the lead is El Sol himself, I am sure."

Convinced that he was right, Buffalo Bill ran back to camp, and, not caring to wait for Tony, called to him that he was going off on a scout, and to await his return there.

Very sleepy, the negro was more than willing, and, mounting his splendid black, Whirlwind, Buffalo Bill dashed away on the trail taken by the horsemen he had seen.

Knowing well the windings of the trail, he was determined to cut ahead by a flank movement, and thus be able to head off Guy Hillary before he met the horsemen, for he had an idea that the young man might camp for the night.

By cutting off well to the right, Buffalo Bill flanked the horsemen, and, after a ride of a couple of hours, came out well ahead, as he believed, for they had been riding slowly along when he had seen them.

But to make sure, the scout dismounted and closely examined the trail for fresh tracks.

The moon was paling under the approach of clouds, and in the gray light he saw fresh tracks.

There were the hoofmarks distinctly of five horses, and they showed that they had passed there at a sweeping gallop.

"Yes, my cut-off did not help me, as they begun to ride at a rapid pace also.

"I must follow their trail now, for if they meet Guy Hillary I must be there at the meeting to help my pard."

So saying, the scout pushed on at a rapid pace, and had ridden several miles when he drew rein suddenly.

He saw a form in the thicket ahead of him.

A closer look and he saw that the form was

swung in the air, a man hanging from the limb of a tree, right over the trail.

There was something that looked familiar to Buffalo Bill in that swinging form, and he spurred forward at full speed, his face stern, his eyes blazing.

Drawing rein suddenly as he drew near, he recognized Guy Hillary.

"My God! They have hanged my pard, and shall rue this day!" cried Buffalo Bill, as he recognized the suspended form.

"Bill, my noble friend, you have saved me!"

The words came from the lips of Guy Hillary, and Buffalo Bill was by his side in an instant, his knife in hand, and the lariat was cut.

"To make it more terrible, Bill, El Sol did not hang me up at once, but put the noose about my neck and let me hold on by one arm to the limb, so that when my strength gave out I should drop and hang myself.

"But you came in time to save me, and they just disappeared as you came in sight."

"And El Sol did this?"

"Yes, after telling me all else that he had done, and that he had Daisy in his power, and others.

"Yes, Bill, I know all," and the voice of the young man quivered and his eyes filled with tears.

"And El Sol shall pay for it all—I have sworn it.

"But how did they catch you, pard Guy?"

"With a lariat; for, suspecting no danger, I rode into their ambush."

"And it is El Sol that is abroad?"

"Yes, with four others, and they are in advance of his captives, he told me, who are with an outlaw guard, on their way to Mexico."

"How many do the guard number?"

"Half-a-dozen, I think he said."

"We must rescue them, Guy."

"It seems madness to attempt it, Bill, but I feel desperate enough to say we will try."

"We will; but how far back did El Sol say they were?"

"I think about an hour's ride."

"Then this is our place to ambush them, and at close quarters."

"Bill, I have my rifle, for they never picked it up from where it fell from my saddle in my scrimmage with them," and Guy Hillary ran over to where the rifle had fallen and found it there.

"Now, Guy, I'll hide my horse, and we will get up among the limbs of these large trees, pick our men, so as to make no mistake, and fire only when they are right under us.

"Not one must escape, and then, when we rescue their captives, we will go on El Sol's trail—and kill him!"

No better tree could have been found for an ambush, and Buffalo Bill and his pard were soon safely in position, and could see for half-a-mile up the trail.

They had not long to wait before the guard and their captives came in view.

"Four women, Bill."

"Yes, Daisy and the two Moore girls, but the fourth I do not know."

"There are six guards."

"Yes, Guy, and you take the three on the left, and I will answer for the three on the right.

"We can drop them all without a miss."

"So I believe, pard Bill, and I am ready."

"As I am, and I will give the word."

Two guards rode together in front, then followed Violet, the sister of El Sol, and Daisy was by her side.

The two Moore girls rode next, with a guard by the side of each, and a couple of outlaws brought up the rear, leading several pack animals.

They were almost beneath them when Buffalo Bill said firmly:

"Now!"

With the flash of the two rifles, the leading guards dropped dead from their saddles.

Then quickly followed other shots, and Buffalo Bill killed his two men, while Guy missed the one nearest one of the Moore girls, and, wheeling his horse, the man dashed away.

But he had not ridden an eighth of a mile back on the trail when a shot rang out and he fell from his saddle, just as Tony dashed into view, for he it was who had checked his flight.

Quickly descending from their ambush, Buffalo Bill and Guy Hillary appeared before the startled and surprised Violet and the three girls.

With a glad cry, Daisy threw herself from her horse, and the next instant her arms were about Guy's neck.

Already had Daisy told her mother all about the Hillarys and their home, and that it was her wicked uncle who had brought death and ruin upon all.

The Moore girls were crying with joy, and in a few words made known to Buffalo Bill that the beautiful, sad-faced woman was Daisy's mother and the sister of El Sol.

"I feel sorry for her, indeed; but that man must die, and dare you two girls aid us to capture or kill that man?"

"Indeed we will, Buffalo Bill, but how?"

"I cannot ask Daisy or her mother; but Guy and myself will play outlaw guards, rig up in their clothing, and ride on to El Sol's camp.

"We will let the others, with Tony, follow on behind, and not know our purpose, while, when we get near enough for action, you two girls scatter, and we will finish the game."

Both girls were more than willing to aid, and Tony having come up, for as he got wide enough awake after the scout departed to see the guard go by with their captives, he had decided to follow them, and came in time to render good service.

Tony was called and let into the secret, and he at once began to deprive several of the outlaws of their outer clothing and capture their horses, which were near, while Buffalo Bill and Guy went to speak to Daisy and her mother.

"Daisy, you go into camp here, with your mother, and Tony will cook a good breakfast for us all, while Guy will help me in something I wish to do," said Buffalo Bill.

Soon after the two Moore girls slipped away, and

joining Buffalo Bill and Guy ahead on the trail, the four mounted and rode on.

"You look enough like the outlaws to fool El Sol, who said he would wait at the river and have breakfast ready," said the eldest sister.

On they rode at a gallop, and Buffalo Bill explained just what he wished done.

A half-hour's ride brought them in sight of the river, and a campfire was burning there.

"Leave El Sol to me, Guy, and don't miss a shot, while, as you girls have a revolver, use it if you get a chance on any one except yourselves, Guy and me.

"See, El Sol stands by the fire and has discovered us.

"Now!"

At a gallop they went forward until within easy pistol range, when Buffalo Bill cried:

"Now, El Sol, I keep my vow!"

A sharp report from Buffalo Bill's rifle and El Sol dropped to his knees, drawing his revolver as he did so, for he realized how he had been caught.

But the scout's rifle was flashing now, and Guy was firing at the group of outlaws, who had no time to seize their weapons or escape, as the Moore girls rode to where their horses were staked out to head off all efforts to escape.

"I die by your hand, Buffalo Bill, curse you!" cried El Sol.

"Yes, and it should have been by the hand of the hangman; but I took no chances," and Buffalo Bill stood gazing down sternly upon the dying man, for already the pallor of death was upon his hardened face.

"He is dead," said Guy, coming up.

"Yes, your kindred are avenged, Guy."

"By you, pard Bill; but what is to be done now?"

"None got away?"

"Not one."

"Ride back and bring up the others, for that poor woman will wish to see her brother's body, as, wicked though he was, she loved him."

Guy departed, and within an hour returned with the others, having told all that had happened.

"My poor, misguided brother! It is better so than to die on the gallows.

"May God forgive you," and she dropped on her knees by the side of the body.

After a consultation it was decided that they would go with Guy to the nearest settlement, where nothing was to be told of the relationship of Daisy's mother to El Sol, while Buffalo Bill, mounted on Whirlwind, should ride with all speed to the fort and guide a force of cavalry to attack the outlaw stronghold.

This the scout did, and the wipe-out of El Sol's band was complete, and the horses and cattle of the Hillarys having been recaptured, Buffalo Bill asked the commanding officer for a dozen men to aid him in taking them back to the ruined home, and to help in rebuilding it for Guy.

This was done, and, when ready, Buffalo Bill went after Guy, who was glad to return and take with him Daisy and her mother, while Tony went along as a matter of course.

To that pretty home Buffalo Bill went nearly a year later, to attend the marriage of Guy Hillary to the beautiful Daisy, and in the enjoyment of seeing their happiness, and that the sadness had left the lovely face of Daisy's mother, Buffalo Bill forgot almost the sorrow he had known on that moonlight night when El Sol had brought death and ruin upon the valley.

Upon his return to his post in the Northwest, Buffalo Bill visited the White Wolf and Minne-Blue-Eyes, and received a warm welcome from them, the pretty Indian girl having married the head chief of her tribe.

Later it was that the Comanches again went on the warpath, and Buffalo Bill once more went to the old scenes and added fame to his name by his many deeds of daring, while mounted upon his king of horses, the Whirlwind of the Prairie, a fitting animal for such a rider as is to-day that prince of the plains, William F. Cody.

TO BE CONTINUED.

LOOK AT THIS, BOYS!

19 PRIZES. || ANECDOTE PRIZE CONTEST || 19 PRIZES

WHO HAS HAD THE MOST EXCITING EXPERIENCE?

THAT'S the idea, boys. You have all had some narrow escapes, some dangerous adventures in your lives! Perhaps it was the capsizing of a boat, or the scaling of a cliff, or a close shave in a burning building, or something else equally thrilling.

WRITE IT UP JUST AS IT HAPPENED.

We offer a handsome Prize for the most exciting and best written anecdote sent us by any reader of **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY**. The incident, of course, must relate to something that has happened to the writer himself, and it must also be strictly true.

It makes no difference how short the articles are, but no contribution must be longer than 500 words.

HERE ARE THE PRIZES!

TWO FIRST PRIZES.

For Two Most Exciting and Best Written Anecdotes.

Two first-class Spalding Standard Athletic Sweaters. Made of the finest Australian lambs' wool, exceedingly soft. Full fashioned to body and arms, and without seams of any kind. Colors: White Navy Blue, Black and Maroon.

TWO SECOND PRIZES.

For Two Second Best Anecdotes.

Two pairs of Raymond's All Clamp Ball Bearing Roller Skates. Bearings of the finest tempered steel, with 128 steel balls. For speed no skate has ever approached it.

FIVE THIRD PRIZES.

For Five Next Best Anecdotes.

Five pairs of Winslow's Speed Extension Ice Skates, with extension foot plates. These skates have detachable welded steel racing runners, also an extra set of short runners for fancy skating.

FOR NEXT TEN BEST ANECDOTES.

A Spalding 12 inch "Long Distance" Megaphone. Made of fire board, capable of carrying the sound of a human voice one mile, and in some instances, two miles. More fun than a barrel of monkeys.

The contest will continue until Dec. 1st, next.

Send in your anecdotes at once, boys. We are going to publish all of the best ones during the progress of the contest.

We will have to reserve to ourselves the right of judging which anecdote has the most merit, but our readers know that they may depend upon Street & Smith and on their absolute fairness and justice in conducting contests. This one will be no exception to the rule.

REMEMBER!

Whether your contribution wins a prize or not, it stands a good chance of being published together with the name of the writer.

To become a contestant for these prizes, cut out the *Anecdote Contest Coupon*, printed herewith, fill it out properly, and send it to **BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY**, care of Street & Smith, 238 William St., New York City, together with your anecdote. No anecdote will be considered that does not have this coupon accompanying it.

COUPON.

"BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY" ANECDOTE CONTEST.
PRIZE CONTEST No. 1.

Date.....1901

Name

City or town.....

State.....

Title of Anecdote

PRIZE ANECDOTE DEPARTMENT.

During the progress of the Anecdote Prize Contest this space is being devoted to the publication of the best anecdotes sent in by the contestants.

Here are some of those received this week. Read them, boys, and then send in your own. There are still plenty of chances for everybody to win the prizes offered.

My Experience with a Drunken Man.

(By Herman Blanchard, 16 years old, Rockland, Mass.)

I work for a business man in this town who hires me to drive him about from place to place in his carriage. He was born and brought up in the great West, and although strictly temperate at other times he goes on a vacation once a year, during which he usually gets drunk.

One night he came out of a popular resort where intoxicating liquors are sold and he was quite drunk. He informed me that he had bought him a saddle horse which had lately been broken to the saddle. We started away leading the new horse behind the carriage.

We had scarcely traveled a mile over the rough country road when the new horse pulled back, yanking the rope out of Mr. Ames' hands. I then said to him, "I will go back and catch him, while you hold the mare, for she is quite restless."

I had just managed to catch the horse when I heard Mr. Ames strike the mare with the whip. Mr. Ames gave a yell of drunken frenzy and away they went. I then mounted the beautiful black horse and gave chase. It was four miles to the town, and the mare had good speed, but I must catch her if I wished to save Mr. Ames from disgrace. He now had a good start and was thrashing the mare with the heavy butt of the whip and yelling madly. But I bent down and patted the great back of my horse and spoke encouragingly to him, and he began to work harder and harder, and we gained rapidly on the team ahead.

I could feel the muscles of the great black horse rise and fall as he strained harder and harder to gain on the tough little mare.

We began to near the mark which told me that we were within two miles of the town, and a feeling of confidence came over me as I realized that I would soon have the team under my control.

Then Mr. Ames suddenly became possessed with the idea that he was being pursued by road agents. As I drew near the buggy I could see the flash of moonlight on the barrel of the nickelplated revolver which he always carries in his hip pocket.

A moment later came a flash and a report, then the hum of the bullet as it passed over my head. It sounded

very much as a nail does when thrown swiftly through the air. Still I was not frightened, for I knew the man was drunk and could not shoot straight. My only chance to stop him was to make him believe that he was really being held up.

So giving my horse a dig with my heels I rode along side of the carriage with that man still firing the bullets about my head.

As I reached the carriage I felt my horse quiver, and at the same time a queer pain and then a numbness came in the right side of my chest.

"Stop that horse or you are a dead man," I yelled, pointing my finger at him. He immediately dropped the revolver on the seat and brought the horse to a standstill. I then rode over and got the revolver off the seat. "Get out of that wagon and lie down on your face," I said, sternly, at the same time sliding from the horse.

I got some cord from the buggy and tied his hands firmly behind his back, and I thank the Buffalo Bill stories I have read that I was able to do my work well. I got into the carriage and drove slowly home. I was just in time to evade the officers who were drawn to the place by the shots. I kept the revolver pointed at Mr. Ames' head most of the way home, and we arrived safely at his house at about twelve o'clock. He arose next morning a better and wiser man, and calmly paid me ten dollars for my part of the enterprise. I had a slight flesh wound in my chest and still carry the scar. Not even my mother knows how I got it.

The horse was struck in two places by a flying bullet, but neither is serious.

Presence of Mind at a Fire.

(By Roy Pilling, Providence, R. I.)

One evening, as I was riding along Cranston street I was nearly home when I smelt smoke. Dismounting from my wheel, I went to the cellar window of a house from which the odor came, and there I smelt it stronger. Thinking the fire was in the cellar of this house, I kicked in the window. As I kicked the window in a man passing saw just what I saw—the whole cellar was on fire. We both ran for the fire alarm. I had just sense left to jump on my wheel. I got there first. I ran into

the store where the key was kept and got it. I ran back to the alarm box, opened it and pulled the lever down. When I pulled it down a buzzing sound commenced. I jumped back just as the man I had started with came running up. It was quite a fire, but it was soon put out. I was praised by my mother and father and by the chief. They made a hero of me.

A Hairbreadth Escape.

(By Starr Thayer, Rock Valley, Iowa.)

I took notice of the prizes offered in the BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY, of which I am a constant reader. I thought I would tell you of an adventure that I had last summer. It is a short one but dangerous.

At that time I was helping in the depot at this town and when the freight train pulled in I went out to help the brakemen switch. I caught onto a car just as it was coming up to a string of elevators. I did not think of the spouts that come out to the cars until it was too late. Now, there was only about a space of six inches between the cars and the spouts and I had to either jump off and run the chance of getting run over or climb up on top, which I did. I just scraped one of the spouts enough for it to catch my coat and tear it and then I made a jump for the top of the car. Just as I was drawing my foot up it hit one of the spouts and nearly knocked me off. If I had been two seconds slower I would have been killed instantly. This all happened in about ten seconds, but that was long enough for me.

My Experience with a Bull.

(By Will Hintz, Saginaw, Mich.)

Reading your BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY—in fact, I read all of Street & Smith's weeklies—I read about your prize contest, and this is my anecdote:

In the fall of 1900 a chum of mine and myself went up the river after wild grapes. We stopped in a woods which covered both sides of the river. This woods was about two hundred yards wide, and back of it was a prairie. The prairie, near the woods, was covered here and there by shrubbery, and a great many elderberry bushes.

A milkman also kept a large herd of cows and a fine, large bull on this prairie. This we did not know.

We picked a few grapes, but being unable to find many we decided to pick elderberries. So we left the woods and commenced to pick elder.

We became so interested in the elderberries that we did not notice the herd of cows coming, that were on their way to the river to drink.

All at once we were startled by a roar that sounded

like distant thunder, and looking up we saw a large bull making straight for us.

For a few seconds we were too astonished to breathe, but on hearing a second roar, we pulled ourselves together and hid back of some bushes. This did not bother the bull, for he came right through the bushes, and we took to our heels for another shelter. The bull was very angry, and, what probably made him worse, I was wearing a maroon sweater.

We kept up a dodging game, from bush to bush for a few minutes. This made him all the worse, and sometimes he was getting so uncomfortably close that I said to my pardner it is best we take to the woods. So we watched our chance, and ran for the woods, the bull after us.

We ran for a tree that was overrun with heavy grape vines. Reaching it, we climbed up the vines into the tree, and none too soon, for Mr. Bull was not far behind.

He rushed up to the tree roaring ferociously. He pawed up the ground around the tree, but we were safe. The cows in the meantime had got tired of waiting for their leader, and went down to the river to drink. The bull roared around the tree for five or ten minutes, but it seemed like an hour to me, and then left us, going after his cows. We got down and left for home as quickly as possible.

Nearly Run Over.

(By Theodore L. Kuett, East Rutherford, N. J.)

As I am a reader of your Buffalo Bill stories I naturally take some interest in your "Anecdote Prize Contest," and the story I am about to relate is true in every respect.

While I was living in New York I was in the habit of coming here to spend my vacations from school, and the incident I am about to relate happened during one of my vacations about six years ago.

I was going on an errand for my grandmother, with whom I was staying, and thought I would walk down the tracks of the Erie Railroad. I had done this many times before, but had never met a train while doing so.

At the present time there are four tracks, but at that time there were but two. As I was nearing my destination, I saw a freight train coming toward me. I stopped and thought, should I stay on the New York bound track or should I cross to the other side?

On my right hand was a ditch filled with water, and on my left was the track on which the freight was approaching. As I could not get over the ditch in case a train came on the track I was on, there was nothing for me to do but to cross the track on my left.

While I was thinking the train was coming nearer and nearer until it was but from thirty to thirty-five feet

away when I started across the track. I was in such a hurry that I tripped over one of the rails and fell so that I laid straight across the track on which the train was approaching. I was so frightened for the moment that I was unable to move and when I did regain my powers of movement all I could do was to roll off the track and crawl away just as the train passed me. If it had been a passenger instead of a freight train I must certainly have been killed. After that I was more careful when crossing in front of moving trains.

The Killing of a Racer.

(By Aaron Maberry, 13 years old, Chicago, Ill.)

Once in Peoria, Ill., Willie, Jack, Eddy and I went across the river in the woods, hunting. All had sticks, but I had my .22 rifle. We killed three sparrows, a squirrel and a rabbit. We had gone a little farther when I heard a funny noise. We all listened and heard a sound in back of us. Turning we saw a snake coming up the road in the shape of a hoop. We were quite a distance away. I was in front. The snake came along, and all of the kids but me ran up the trees. I quickly loaded up my gun, but I did not get to shoot it, for the snake was upon me. I hit it a stunning blow, which tumbled it over. Then I took the rifle and shot its head to pieces with bullets, but I did not see what was going on until I had killed the snake. We took him home. We cooked the birds, the squirrel and rabbit at Jack's house. The next day I came here to Chicago, where I now live.

An Exciting Adventure with a Bear.

(By David B. Lynch, Duluth, Minn.)

It was about five years ago when I was living in Portland, Oregon, that I, with my mother and uncle and some friends, went camping up in the foothills of Northern Oregon. We camped at a nice place in the woods, and I took a fishing rod and proceeded to catch some fish, as the stream was abundant with them. I went about a half a mile up stream and in a nice shady spot I began to catch them.

I had a nice string when I heard a rustling of leaves across the stream, which was about twelve or fifteen feet wide, but was deep, but for some reason I did not pay any attention to.

In about ten seconds I heard a noise which made me look up and my eyes bulge, and my heart nearly stop beating.

Across the stream from out of the bushes there came a full-grown bear, sniffing the air, and moving his head from side to side.

He could not see me, for I had got behind a clump of

bushes so that the trout could not see me, for they will not bite if they even see any one's shadow. He was trying to make out what it was, I suppose. I then remembered that I was a long ways from camp, with no gun and a bear within ten feet of me.

My case was desperate, but I tried to make the best of it. I dropped my fishing rod and took to my heels as fast as my legs could take me. When I was about half way I trusted myself to look back, and giving a yell, I fairly flew over the ground.

When I got to camp I quickly told my uncle and he got his gun and we went back as fast as we could, the bear had evidently given up the chase, but my uncle found his tracks and sending me back to camp, he went on after the bear. He did not get the bear, for he lost track of it, but for his trouble he got a good fat deer.

Chased by a Bull.

(By Walter Miller, East Orange, N. J.)

I had a very exciting time two weeks ago in the country. One day as I was going through a field with a friend of mine, we were walking slow when my friend yelled: "Look out!"

I looked around to see what was the matter when I was almost dazed to see a big bull coming toward me at full speed. I did not know what to do. I looked around quick to see where I could go and spied a fence about fifty yards away. I ran toward it as fast as I could. I reached the fence and gave a leap and just cleared it as the bull reached the fence. I lay there for about five minutes unable to walk. As I lay there thinking what made the beast chase me I found that it must have been the red cap that I wore. You can bet that I never wore that cap when there was a bull within sight.

CORRESPONDENCE.

J. Quinn.—Your article did not fill the requirements of the contest in that it was not a personal experience.

C. Benson.—Your article was not a personal experience. Therefore it could not be printed in this department.

G. A.—Thank you for your kind words! Yes, you are quite right. The present series of the Buffalo Bill stories are the most fascinating ever published.

T. O. S.—Your story will appear next week. The present edition had gone to press when your article came. Our readers should bear in mind that on account of the enormous edition which the BUFFALO BILL WEEKLY requires, it is necessary to have the matter in hand some time before the date of publication. We suppose most of our readers have little idea of the time it takes to publish a single edition, despite the extensive facilities of our presses and the great size of our bindery. If they could see the giant presses in action and the enormous number of copies that are turned out each week we are sure they would easily understand how much time is required in getting out each issue.

BOYHOODS OF FAMOUS MEN.

This department contains each week the story of the early career of some celebrated American. Watch for these stories and read them, boys. They are of the most fascinating interest.

Those already published are: No. 1.—Buffalo Bill; No. 2.—Kit Carson; No. 3.—Texas Jack; No. 4.—Col. Daniel Boone; Nos. 5 and 6.—David Crockett.

No. 7.—General Sam Houston.

General Sam Houston did more for the State of Texas than any other man. A wonderful general, he was the conqueror of Santa Anna, thereby wresting Texas from the hands of the Mexicans. Then he became the first president of the republic which was then formed of Texas. Finally when Texas was annexed to the United States, General Houston became a United States Senator and won permanent fame as a statesman, general and administrator.

General Sam Houston was born the 2d of March, 1793, in Rockbridge County, Virginia, seven miles east of Lexington, at a place known as Timber Ridge Church. The day of his birth he was, many years afterward, to celebrate as the anniversary of the birth of a new republic—for it was on his natal day that Texas declared herself free and independent.

His ancestors on his father's and mother's side are traced back to the Highlands of Scotland. They are there found fighting for "God and liberty," by the side of John Knox. During those times of trouble they emigrated with that numerous throng of brave men and women, who were driven away from their Highland homes to seek a refuge in the north of Ireland. Here they remained till the siege of Derry, in which they were engaged, when they emigrated to Pennsylvania. For more than a century these families seemed to have kept together in all their wanderings, and at last a union was formed between them, by the marriage of his parents, who had been sometime settled in Virginia, when the birth of the subject of this article took place.

His father was a man of moderate fortune; indeed, he seems to have possessed the means only of a comfortable subsistence. He was known only for one passion, and this was for a military life. He had borne his part in the Revolution, and was successively the Inspector of General Bowyer's and General Moore's Brigades. The latter post he held till his death, which took place in 1807, while he was on a tour of inspection among the Alleghany Mountains. He was a man of powerful frame, fine bearing and indomitable courage. These qualities

his son inherited, and they were the only legacy he had to leave him.

His mother was an extraordinary woman. She was distinguished by a full, rather tall and matronly form, a fine carriage, and an impressive and dignified countenance. She was gifted with intellectual and moral qualities, which elevated her, in a still more striking manner, above most of her sex. Her life shone with purity and benevolence, and yet she was nerved with a stern fortitude, which never gave way in the midst of the wild scenes that checkered the history of the frontier settler. Her beneficence was universal, and her name was called with gratitude by the poor and the suffering. Many years afterward, her son returned from his distant exile, to weep by her bedside when she came to die.

Such were the parents of this man. Those who know his history will not be astonished to find that they were of that noble race, which first subdued the wilderness of Virginia, the forests of Tennessee, and the ferocity of their savage inhabitants. It is a matter of some interest to inquire what were the means of education offered to this Virginia boy. We have learned from all quarters that he never could be got into a schoolhouse, till he was eight years old, nor can we learn that he ever accomplished much, in a literary way, after he did enter. Virginia, which has never become very famous for her district schools, had still less to boast of forty years ago. The State made little or no provision, by law, for the education of its citizens and each neighborhood was obliged to take care of its rising population.

Long before this period Washington College had been removed to Lexington, and a "Field school" was kept in the ruined old edifice, once occupied by that institution. This school seems, from all accounts (and we have taken some pains to inform ourselves about this matter), to have been of doubtful utility.

Houston is said to have learned to read and write, and to have gained some imperfect ideas of ciphering. Late in the fall and the winter were the only seasons he was allowed to improve even the dubious advantages of such

a school. The rest of the year he was kept to hard work. If he worked very well, he was sometimes permitted to run home from the fields, to be in time to retain his place in spelling.

But it is doubtful if he ever went to such a school more than six months in all, till the death of his father, which took place when he was thirteen years old. This event changed at once the fortunes of the family. They had been maintained in comfortable circumstances, chiefly through the exertions of the father, and now they were to seek for other reliances.

Mrs. Houston was left with the heavy burden of a numerous family. She had six sons and three daughters. But she was not a woman to succumb to misfortune, and she immediately sold out her homestead and prepared to cross the Alleghany Mountains, and find a new home on the fertile banks of the Tennessee River.

Those of our readers who live in a crowded population, surrounded by all that embellishes civilized life, may be struck with the heroism of a Virginia woman who, fifty years ago, took up her journey through those unpeopled regions, and yet few of them can have any adequate conception of the hardships such a heroine had to encounter.

There is room for the imagination to play around the toilsome path of this widow and her children, as she pushed her adventurous way to her forest home. Fired still with the same heroic spirit which first led them to try the woods, our daring little party stopped not till they reached the limits of the emigration of those days. They halted eight miles from the Tennessee River, which was then the boundary between white men and the Cherokee Indians.

Young Houston was now set to work with the rest of the family in breaking up the virgin soil, and providing the means of subsistence. There seems to have been very little fancy in his occupations, for some time; he became better acquainted than ever with what is called hard work—a term which has a similar signification in all languages and countries.

There was an academy established in that part of East Tennessee, about this time, and he went to it for a while, just after Hon. Mr. Jarnagin, who long represented his State in the United States Senate, had left it. He had got possession, in some way, of two or three books, which had a great power over his imagination. No boy ever reads well till he feels a thirst for intelligence and no surer indication is needed that this period has come than to see the mind directed toward those gigantic heroes who rise like spectres from the ruins of Greece and Rome, towering high and clear above the darkness and gloom of the Middle Ages. He had, among other works, Pope's *Iliad*, which he read so constantly, we have been assured on the most reliable authority, he could repeat it almost entire from beginning to end.

His imagination was now fully awakened, and his emulation began to be stirred. Reading translations from Latin and Greek soon kindled his desire to study those primal languages, and so decided did this propensity become, that on being refused, when he asked the master's permission, he turned on his heel and declared solemnly that he would never recite another lesson of any other kind while he lived—and from what we have been able to learn of his history we think it very probable

that he kept his word! He had caught the "wonted fire" that still "lives in the ashes" of their heroes, and his future life was to furnish the materials of an epic more strange than many a man's, whose name has become immortal.

His elder brothers seem to have crossed his wishes occasionally, and by a sort of fraternal tyranny quite common, exercised over him some severe restraints. At last they compelled him to go into a merchant's store and stand behind the counter. This kind of life he had little relish for, and he suddenly disappeared. A great search was made for him, but he was nowhere to be found for several weeks.

At last intelligence reached the family that Sam had crossed the Tennessee River, and gone to live among the Indians, where, from all accounts, he seemed to be living much more to his liking. They found him, and began to question him on his motives for this novel proceeding.

Sam was now, although so very young, nearly six feet high, and standing straight as an Indian, coolly replied that "he preferred measuring deer tracks to tape—that he liked the wild liberty of the red men better than the tyranny of his own brothers, and if he could not study Latin in the academy he could, at least, read a translation from the Greek in the woods, and read it in peace. So they could go home as soon as they liked."

His family, however, thinking this a freak from which he would soon recover when he got tired of the Indians, gave themselves no great uneasiness about him. But week after week passed away, and Sam did not make his appearance.

At last his clothes were worn out, and he returned to be refitted. He was kindly received by his mother, and, for a while, his brothers treated him with due propriety. But the first act of tyranny they showed drove him to the woods again, where he passed entire months with his Indian mates, chasing the deer through the forest with a fleetness little short of their own—engaging in all those gay sports of the happy Indian boys, and wandering along the banks of the streams by the side of some Indian maiden, sheltered by the deep woods, conversing in that universal language which finds its sure way to the heart.

From a strange source we have learned much of his Indian history, during these three or four years, and, in the absence of facts, it would be no difficult matter to fancy what must have been his occupations. Houston has since seen nearly all there is in life to live for, and yet he has been heard to say that, as he looks back over the waste of life, there's much that is sweet to remember in this sojourn he made among the untutored children of the forest.

And yet, this running wild game, living in the forests, and reading Homer's *Iliad* withal, seemed a pretty strange business, and people used to say that Sam Houston would either be a great Indian chief, or die in a madhouse, or be governor of the State—for it was very certain that some dreadful thing would overtake him!

Well, it may have been doubtful, and it was for a long time, what all this would end in. But the mystery has cleared away, somewhat, since the battle of San Jacinto.

Certain it is that his early life among the Indians was, as the event proved, a necessary portion of that wonderful training that fitted him for his strange destiny. There he was initiated into the profound mysteries of the red man's character, and a taste was formed for forest life which made him, many years after, abandon once more the habitations of civilized men, with their coldness, their treachery and their vices, and pass years among the children of the Great Spirit, till he finally led the way to the achievement of the independence of a great domain, and the consolidation of a powerful commonwealth.

Certain it is that no man whose history we know, has lived on this continent, who has had so complete a knowledge of the Indian character—none who could sway so powerful a control over the savage mind. During his entire administration of the government of Texas not an Indian tribe violated a treaty with the republic; and it is nearly as safe to say that during the administration of others, not a tribe was known to make or regard one.

During the latter part of June, 1846, General Morehead arrived at Washington with forty wild Indians from Texas, belonging to more than a dozen tribes. We saw their meeting with General Houston. One and all ran to him and clasped him in their brawny arms, and hugged him like bears to their naked breasts, and called him father; beneath the copper skin and thick paint the blood rushed, and their faces changed, and the lip of many a warrior trembled, although the Indian may not weep. These wild men knew him, and revered him as one who was too directly descended from the Great Spirit to be approached with familiarity, and yet they loved him so well they could not help it.

These were the men "he had been," in the fine language of Acquiquash, whose words we quote, "too subtle for, on the warpath—too powerful in battle, too magnanimous in victory, too wise in council, and too true in faith."

They had flung away their arms in Texas, and with the Comanche chief who headed their file, they had come to Washington to see their father. I said these iron warriors shed no tears, when they met their old friend—but white men who stood by, will tell us what they did.

We were there and we have witnessed few scenes in which mingled more of what is called the moral sublime. In the gigantic form of Houston, on whose ample brow the beneficent love of a father was struggling with the sternness of the patriarch warrior; we saw civilization awing the savage at his feet. We needed no interpreter to tell us that this impressive supremacy was gained in the forest.

But we have lost the thread of our story. This wild life among the Indians lasted till his eighteenth year. He had, during his visits once or twice a year to his family, to be refitted in his dress, purchased many little articles of taste or utility to use among the Indians. In this manner he had incurred a debt which he was bound in honor to pay. To meet this engagement, he had no other resource left but to abandon his "dusky companions," and teach the children of palefaces. As may naturally be supposed, it was no easy matter for him to

get a school, and on the first start the enterprise moved very slowly.

But as the idea of abandoning anything on which he had once fixed his purpose was no part of his character, he persevered, and in a short time he had more scholars to turn away than he had at first to begin with.

He was also paid what was considered an exorbitant price. Formerly no master had hinted above \$6 per annum. Houston, who probably thought that one who had been graduated at an Indian university, ought to hold his lore at a dearer rate, raised the price to \$8—one-third to be paid in corn, delivered at the mill, at 33 1-3 cents per bushel—one-third in cash, and one-third in domestic cotton cloth, of variegated colors, in which our Indian professor was dressed. He also wore his hair behind, in a snug queue, and is said to have been very much in love with it, probably from an idea that it added somewhat to the adornment of his person—in which, too, he was probably mistaken.

When he had made money enough to pay his debts, he shut up his school, and went back to his old master to study. He put Euclid into his hands. He carried that ugly, unromantic book back and forth to and from the school a few days, without trying to solve even so much as the first problem, and then came to the very sensible conclusion, that he would never try to be a scholar! This was in 1813. But fortunately an event now took place which was to decide his fate.

The bugle had sounded, and for the second time America was summoned to measure her strength with the mistress of the seas. A recruiting party of the United States army came to Maryville, with music, a banner and some well-dressed sergeants. Of course, young Houston enlisted—anybody could have guessed as much. His friends said he was ruined—that he must by no means join the army as a common soldier. He then made his first speech, as far as we can learn: "And what have your craven souls to say about the ranks? Go to, with your stuff; I would much sooner honor the ranks than disgrace an appointment. You don't know me now, but you shall hear of me."

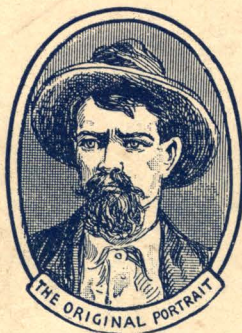
His old friends and acquaintances, considering him hopelessly disgraced, cut his acquaintance at once. His mother gave her consent as she stood in the door of her cottage, and handed her boy the musket: "There, my son, take this musket," she said, "and never disgrace it; for remember, I had rather all my sons should fill one honorable grave than that one of them should turn his back to save his life. Go, and remember, too, that while the door of my cottage is open to brave men, it is eternally shut against cowards."

He marched off. He was soon promoted to a sergeant. In a short time he became the best drill in the regiment—soon after he was marched to Fort Hampton, at the head of the Mobile Shoals, in Alabama, where he was promoted to an ensign. Returned to Knoxville—assisted in drilling and organizing the Eastern Battalion of the 39th Regiment of Infantry; and from thence marched to the Ten Islands, where he remained encamped for some time.

His boyhood was now over, so what followed in his life belongs to another time.

But young as he was he had already shown the traits which were to make him a great man.

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